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ABSTRACT

The main intentions of the two-day teachers' conference on language disabilities held at East Carolina University were to provide background information on how children acquire linguistic habits, to identify and suggest remedies for certain socioemotional problems which interfere with learning, to isolate problems arising from diversity in linguistic competence, and to describe reading and writing remedial programs for semiliterate students. This volume contains the following articles, all of which were presented at the conference: "The Acquisition of Language"; "Detecting and Correcting Reading Deficiencies"; "Six Strategies for Improving Freshman Composition Instruction in the 1970s"; "Freshman Composition: A Course Conceptualization"; "Achieving the Goals of Remedial English Programs"; "Developing Language Skills for Modern Living"; "Phonology and the New English"; "Accommodating Deficiencies in Reading and Writing"; and "Who Requires Remedial Reading." (JM)

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LEARNING DISABILITIES

AND THE

LANGUAGE ARTS

A SURVEY OF READING AND WRITING
INSTRUCTION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A CONFERENCE REPORT – NOVEMBER 7 AND 8, 1975

INITIATED AND SPONSORED BY THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

MAY, 1975

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Addresses Presented at A Conference

on

LEARNING DISABILITIES AND THE LANGUAGE ARTS

edited by

Janice Hardison Faulkner

Conference Director

Initiated and Sponsored by The English Department

East Carolina University

Greenville, North Carolina

May, 1975

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FORWARD

This conference on learning disabilities and their relation to the teaching of language arts in secondary schools is a product of a continuing effort by the English Department to stay attuned to a constantly changing scene. It was planned in keeping with our aim to provide a channel through which the best experience among us, at whatever level, could be made available to all of us. The scheduled discussions covered a wide range of topics, all selected with the idea that our teaching of the language arts improves as our understanding of the various capabilities of our students increases.

One of the most pressing responsibilities of teachers is the necessity to keep abreast of developments in their own disciplines and in related fields. We designed two days of lecture and discussion with the intention of (1) providing background on the means by which children acquire their linguistic habits, (2) identifying and suggesting remedies for certain socio-emotional problems which interfere with learning. (3) isolating problems arising from diversity in linguistic competence, and (4) describing remedial programs designed to teach reading and writing to semi-literate students.

It was our desire that two days of intensive discussion with acknowledged experts in a number of related fields, psychology, linguistics, special education, and teacher training, would broaden our own perspective on the status of instruction in reading and writing and would, to some degree, enable us to raise substantially the level of literacy among students in our secondary schools.

Copies of this volume may be obtained by writing to the editor at the English Department, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina. The cost is one dollar per copy.

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THE ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE

by

Dr. John Lutz

There have been many developments in psycholinguistics in the last ten to fifteen years. Perhaps the most striking is that some linguists and psycholinguists have suggested that language is innate. Linguists have claimed this firstly, because all humans speak. Secondly, language develops in children in an apparently very well fixed manner, very rapidly. By age 4 or 5 the child is able to use all the basics in adult language. He uses grammatical constructions like negative sentences; questions in which parts agree with each other; and complex, "embedded" sentences like "You think I can do it?". The child doesn't have "Tag endings" like "aren't you" yet, but this is quite a refinement--a luxury, and seems to be relatively complex, involving deletion, agreement of pronoun with subject, negation, and interrogation.

Thirdly, the child is doing more than just imitating, because (A) he uses his own versions of grammar at the beginning (holophrases or one word sentences, and later pivot grammars or two or three-word sentences with two parts of speech and rules for their use which are different from adult rules) and (B) he makes mistakes of a very systematic sort, called regularizations. He says "goed," comed," "sheeps," "feets". Thus, he seems to have learned two basic English language rules; for plurals add -s, for past tense add -ed, and supplies them in all necessary cases, even to irregular words, which he apparently hasn't yet realized are irregular. Therefore, the irregulars give him trouble in speech because he looks for regularities or rules. It seems likely that the same problem can arise in

in learning to read, because there are so many irregularities in English spelling.

Most primers and early readers are terrible in this respect. They do not emphasize the possible regularities in spelling. Phonics has been somewhat better, because of the emphasis on teaching each vowel sound one at a time. The word family approach is even better (cat, fat, sat, hat, pat, bat). This is used in Merrill Linguistic Readers and in Dr. Seuss books. This is less of a problem for High School Level, where the big problem seems to be one of motivation.

(C) Another reason the child isn't just imitating is that he gets only a small sample (sometimes an inaccurate or poor sample) of language, but still learns to talk effectively. The poor quality of the sample may cause him to have "colloquialisms" or "slang" speech, or to have small vocabulary, but he can use that effectively. This leads me to a digression--linguists have concluded that correctness is determined by usage--that if all people are using a form, they have implicitly agreed that it is acceptable to do so. This is certainly the way it was before Gutenburg. To me, the implication is that a teacher should be less sensitive to speech "errors". As long as the teacher (and some of the others in the child's world--parents, other kids) provides a good model of adult speech, then eventually the child will learn some standard English. After all, why punish the child for the way he talks? That's just likely to discourage him.

Also, it seems that the young child profits very little from direct attempts to modify his language. Brown (1963), for example, reports the following dialog between a mother and her young child.

C: Nobody don't like me.

M: No, say "Nobody likes me".

C: (8 times later)
Oh, Nobody don't likes me.

Thus, the idea is that the child has to be maturationally ready to profit from language training in the early years. A first grade teacher may frustrate herself and the child be demanding too much.

There's one final important notion I want to mention. Linguists have pointed out what they call a "competence-performance lag" which more or less means for us that the child's ability to understand precedes, or is more fully developed than, his ability to speak. This, along with the fact that most children have an adequate language speaking ability by age 5, suggests that you need not "talk down" to children so much (as happens in Basal Readers with "See Dick. See Jane"). You need only limit your vocabulary appropriately and speak in sentences of 10 to 15 words or less, which is what most of us do naturally. This also suggests that just because a child does not express himself well does not mean that he can't understand you. Look for other signs of this. In such a case you might like to provide the child with material which does not strain his expressive ability but which makes full use of his comprehension ability. Give him appropriate "yes-no" questions.

I have not really provided any vocabulary estimates. This used to be done, but is now rather passe. It is sufficient to say that most six year olds will have a speaking vocabulary of 2000 to 5000 words at a conservative estimate. Thus the import of all of this is that the average middle class child comes to school with a fairly well developed language background, which is not easily changed.

DETECTING AND CORRECTING READING DEFICIENCIES

by

Dr. Mabel Laughter

Detecting and correcting reading deficiencies on the secondary level will be the focus of our concern during this second session. We will explore types of reading deficiencies, how and when they develop, and make recommendations for identifying and correcting such reading problems.

However, before one understands what is abnormal about reading, he must be aware of just what reading really is. Reading is a response made by the learner. It must be learned by a learner and is interrelated with his total growth and development. Students show vast differences in their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. They have different backgrounds, experiences, and interests. And they have received different instruction. Therefore, any one class will have readers with varying levels of skill or proficiency.

When students experience reading difficulties, these can be manifested in one aspect of the reading process or many weaknesses may be present at the same time. A careful look at what happens when a particular student reads will illustrate quickly where difficulties can occur. Reading is a thinking process. It is initiated by attending to a printed smybol or symbols.

As the reader attends to the symbol, he applies certain perceptual skills which allow him to recognize the word as saw and not cat. When this is done, the word is known on sight as one he's learned before, or the reader must use a variety of recognition techniques to determine what the word is. These techniques could include the use of sounds of the letters

in the word, the word that ought to come at this particular place in the sentence (context), or recognizing a known root and just adding a prefix or suffix to what he already knows.

Once the word is recognized, then its basic meaning is recalled. The reader must be aware though that all words are not given their exact meaning and watch for the way that particular word is used. He then decides if this information is what it seems to be or must be read between the lines to get the author's real meaning. All information must be classified in order that the main idea becomes apparent. The reader then makes a personal judgment about the accuracy and value of the information, accepting or rejecting it as he will.

When the student is learning to read, he must master each of the different sets of skills used during the act of reading: the perceptual skills, the word recognition or decoding skills, and the meaning-getting or comprehension skills. In addition to these that are actually used in recognizing print, he must master what are called the reading-study skills. A lack of one or more specific skills in any set can cause the reader to experience difficulty or perhaps not to read at all. If a lack of seemingly unimportant skills goes unattended in the instructional program, then these may become serious weaknesses. Weaknesses in the basic skills just mentioned are usually one of the major causes of poor reading ability.

Four differing assumptions have been identified to account for reading deficiencies.[2:36]

1. Reading deficiency is attributed to <u>some</u> <u>malfunction</u>, preventing the student from benefiting from experience.

2. Reading deficiency is attributed to something that is present, but must be removed (dislike for reading).
3. Reading deficiency is attributed to the absence of some function, which needs to be added (lack of phonics skill).
4. Reading deficiency is attributed to mismatches between student and task (improper material, mode of instruction).[2:36]

Examination of the first assumption reveals that when there is a malfunction, one or several factors may go wrong. A major determiner of whether a student will be successful in reading or other learning is his background of experience. Concepts develop from experience and vary in proportion to the richness and depth of the student's involvement. The opportunity for experience often depends upon whether or not the person is favored by socioeconomic status. A functional relationship was seen to exist between mental age and socioeconomic class in Vilscek's research. The lower the mental age of the pupil, the higher the socioeconomic level had to be for initial learning to read. On the other hand, the lower the socioeconomic level, the higher the mental age had to be. Social class provides certain economic advantages for the student, but it also determines what goals the student will seek, what attitudes he will hold, how motivated toward schools he will be, his interest in school and its cirricular offerings, and the friends he will choose, and it is positively related to intelligence, adjustment, achievement, educational level attained, church activity, interests, age of marriage, work adjustment, educational aspiration, and language experience and skills.

However, we must be aware that the socially deprived do not lack the cerebral functions upon which more advanced learning is based. These children can learn and must be given the opportunity.[2:41-46]

A second malfunction may occur because of the student's rate of maturation. Students generally become ready for specific learning tasks at different ages. They will develop reading skills most readily if they are built upon the natural foundation of maturational development. Students put most effort into tasks that are neither too difficult nor too easy.

Students who are forced into readiness for either beginning reading or for any subsequent reading skill before maturational development is sufficient may do three things:

1. They may not learn to read or do the particular activity asked of them.
2. Learning may be only temporary. The child may learn a word today. The next time he meets the same word he does not recognize it.
3. Premature learning may cause the student to lose his natural enthusiasm for the activity. It is very doubtful that drill and exercises can be substituted for maturation.[4:46-48]

A third malfunction may occur if the student's general level of capability is low. He is limited by the level of his intellectual development. However, the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) cannot be considered as an adequate criterion for reading achievement. Intelligence may be looked upon as a student's present functioning level, but if the student's enviroment or experience is defective, the measure of the student's present functioning level is inaccurate. Intelligence is significant in that it puts a ceiling upon individual achievement. It is a long range prediction of the student's

performance. Present research indicates that the great majority of poor readers have intelligence quotients between 80 and 110. Frequently though the most severely retarded readers in relation to their mental age have intelligence quotients of 30 or more.[2:52]

Malfunction can occur in a fourth area - the child's physical development. Vision, hearing, and thinking (thought) are absolutely necessary for reading development. If impairments are present in the eyes, ears, or brain, then reading development may be hindered.[2:53]

Malfunctions also occur because a fifth area has been ignored - the student's motivational readiness. Lack of interest is an important cause of poor reading. In order to achieve in reading, the child must want to learn. His interests will determine whether he will read, how much he will read, and in what area he will read. Our prime concern is that students do read and enjoy the task. Motivation flows from interest.[2:86-89]

The classroom teacher must be slow in attributing the reading difficulties of even one student to emotional or social problems. Poor readers do not have an identifiable personality. They may be well-adjusted or poorly adjusted. Generally though, if the reading failure is an emotional problem, the student will have difficulties in other academic areas also. If the emotional problem is caused by failure in reading, it will be reduced when the pupil learns to read.[2:83-86]

The second major assumption about reading deficiency is attributed to something that is present but must be removed. A student's social and emotional reactions influence his learning to read. Obviously his self-concept or self-image is a significant determiner of learning. Research indicates that most learners come to school with rather well-adjusted

personalities. Personality maladjustment seems more frequently to be an effect of rather than a cause of reading failure. Poor readability threatens social acceptance and leads to feelings of inadequacy. In some cases, however, personal maladjustment seems to precipitate problems with reading.[2:76-77]

The third assumption notes that there may be an absence of some function which needs to be added. Reading is a process which comes about as the result of the student's interralating several separate skills simultaneously. If he fails to utilize the proper combination of skills, a breakdown may occur in his reading. Reading instruction must be designed to ferret out the causes and help the child overcome them. Among the causes of such breakdowns are weaknesses in one or more of the basic reading skills. On the other hand, the student is aware of the other skills but overworks one. He tries one skill such as phonics, finds that it works, and then tries to use just phonics for every word he meets. Since some words are not phonetic by nature, they do not lend themselves to recognition by this skill. The child blocks when this happens, not knowing how to proceed from there. The child may have no strategy to begin recognizing words. He does not realize that he should supply a word which makes sense in that particular portion of the reading and which begins and ends exactly the same as the unknown word. Calling words but not understanding them is another frequent cause of poor reading. Another major cause of poor reading is that the student does not think as he reads. He does not bring his experiences to the printed page for help in understanding the story situation. Many other such problems could be cited.

The fourth assumption notes that there has been a mismatch between the student and the task required of him. One of the gravest errors committed by reading teachers is that of forcing the child to read materials that are too difficult for him. The student finds that the information gained is not

worth the effort that it takes to recognize the words and absorb their meaning. Too often the child is forced to read about something which is of little interest to him. The teacher has failed to arouse interest in the subject be peaking the child's curiosity. The child makes no effort or at best a half-hearted one. Consequently, the best that reading has to offer often goes untapped. Such a reader may learn the mechanics of how to read but will never find reading to be a worthwhile personal activity.

We come now to the most important consideration in our examination of reading difficulties at the secondary level. Is every secondary teacher a teacher of reading as well as of his specialty? Must he teach reading along with his math, science, English, home economics, or agriculture? The answer is yes if his students use a textbook or any other reading reference as part of their daily work.

Well! Why? The elementary teacher was supposed to have taught all the students how to read!

Consider for the moment one all encompassing question.

Are the six or eight years of elementary school long enough to teach the students how to read, how to study as well as how to read Shakespeare or learn the vocabulary of Home Economics 1 or Algebra I? Even if it were long enough, have the children had enough worldly experience or learned to think deeply enough to handle adult-level ideas while they are still in elementary school? If not, then our responsibility on the secondary level is clear-cut.

The student does not come into English II ready to begin a deep analization of classical works. Nor does he go into Algebra I ready to read the text and perform algebraic-type operations. The teacher responsible for teaching him these special subjects must be responsible for helping him use

that particular textbook as best he can. It is imperative that every secondary teacher show his students how to read the books he requires.

When students cannot read enough to master the content of your course, does that relieve you of your responsibility to teach them the important concepts contained in your subject? You are answering this question with a yes if you continue to lecture, assign the reading of your text, and test. Of course the student is guaranteed to fail in such a course. His lack of reading skill precludes this. Such a teacher is not failing the student because he was unable to learn the content. How does this teacher know whether the student was unable to learn the ideas presented? The student was given only two chances to learn -- one, what was discussed in class, and the other is no chance at all because the student cannot read the text, nor frequently the test questions.

What is to be done in order to prevent such a stalemate?

A three-phase attack should be launched upon the problem.

Phase I. Make a preliminary examination of the class which you are to teach using existing data.[1:168-169]

Find out the type success you can expect for each student. Examine the permanent records for IQ scores and standardized reading scores. Plot these on a graph. Note who can read and is on grade level or above in his skill, note who is average or above in ability but cannot read well, note who is below average in ability and cannot read well either. Such a graph tells you how many varying levels of ability exist in your class and if you must differentiate your teaching in order to accommodate them.

Phase II. During the first three or four class meetings administer a diagnostic test for your students. This test should be based upon the skills which will be necessary for learning in your particular course.[3:94] You can construct such a test as follows:

Section I. Basic Vocabulary

Step 1: Compile a list of the basic vocabulary terms common to this subject - ex. Algebra I.

Step 2: Design an activity which will ask the student to identify each term.

Example: Circle the word in each row which I call.

Row 1. biology

Row 2. life, etc.

Step 3: Make a prognosis of your student's background of experience for handling this course. (1) If no experience with the vocabulary - extensive teaching will be required. (2) If a good background is indicated - advanced teaching or in-depth study is in order.

Section II. Use of the Course Textbook

Step 1: Devise a series of questions which check your students' ability to utilize the course text efficiently. The areas which must be assessed are:

1. Table of Contents
2. Index
3. Glossary
4. Ability of individual students to get information from the text. For example, have the students read two or more short passages from the book. Devise a series of questons about the stories. Have the students write the answers to the questions without using their texts.

Step 2: Analyze your data. Which students are not able to handle the text at all? Which students get some information, but not adequate for full understanding? Which students can use the material with ease?

Section III. How efficiently does each student read the material?

Step 1: Select a passage of 300 or more words. Have the students read the passage silently. Time them to see how long it takes them. Suggestion: Record the beginning time (in minutes and seconds) on the board. Continue to record the time in order that when the student finishes, he can record the last time listed. Subtract starting time from finishing time.

Step 2: To find his rate of reading, divide the total number of words by the total time to get the average words per minute for the reading.

Section IV. How efficiently can the student use general reading skills?

*Certain basic reading skills are used more by secondary students than are others. These are:

1. Syllabication
2. Main Idea
3. Using context to identify new words
4. Drawing inferences from what is read
5. Organizing what is read into a logical body of information

Step 1: Devise an activity(s) in which the student is actually performing each of the skills most frequently utilized by secondary students.

Step 2: Evaluate the results. If the student is unable to use any or several of these skills, special help should be provided by the teachers.

*If the class is a content-subject such as math or science, etc., devise a worksheet which corresponds to the topic being developed, but which also requires the student to react to the particular reading skill which needs developing.

*The remedial English teacher should systematically give an informal reading test to determine the extent of the reading problem. Specific help should be provided in the problem areas.

Section V. Identify any special reading abilities which are peculiar only to the reading in your subject area text. Devise exercises to check your students' ability to use these.

Section VI. How Well Do the Students Study?

Step 1: Examine their system for studying - is it systematic - is it efficient as is the SQ3R?

Step 2: Examine your students' ability to take examinations as they are given in your course.

Phase III. Utilizing the Results of the Diagnostic Survey for Differentiated Teaching

The information gained from the Diagnostic Survey assists you in determining exactly how each student should be helped. During the study of the first topic, include activities which build the weaknesses noted and teach the course concepts simultaneously. Continue these skills building activities during the study of other topics if such training is necessary. Differentiated Teaching does not mean each student is studying a different topic. All students can and should be studying about the same topic in English, social studies, and science, regardless of their levels of ability. It does mean structuring the learning sequences in such a manner that the advanced student with a good background

knowledge of the topic does in-depth study while the non-readers or those with poor backgrounds master the fundamental comcepts. By the same token, all students should not be required to learn everything about a topic. Only the more advanced students should be expected to master all the major concepts as well as the numerous supporting details. A student with low reading skill and low general ability will be able to master only the most basic vocabulary and concepts. Yet it is your responsibility to help him learn this and in addition learn to read about this topic. The average student should learn the basic vocabulary and concepts as well as many supporting details. However, he should not be required to master these at the same depth as the advanced student. The following steps will provide for differentiated learning:

Step 1: Find many alternate activities which provide for the same content learning.

Step 2: Utilize reading-study guides which indicate who is to perform each of the activities.

Step 3: Culminate the study by having all students contribute information to the extent of their own study of the topic.

Step 4: When the final evaluation or test is given, expect each student to answer only the items which he has learned in detail.

All students should have reading experiences to accompany the study of each topic. Even non-readers must memorize the basic words and read them in simple sentences. Few books provide these simple readings, however. If these are not available, write your own. All chapters in the basic text should be rewritten for the low level readers. An alternate resource would be the taping of the teacher as he reads the chapter. The slower students would

follow in the text as the teacher reads from the cassette. Of course, much supplementary reading material should be made available to the better readers.

A final caution that I would leave you is: Reading is a tool to be used whenever information is needed from printed sources.

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SIX STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING FRESHMAN COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION IN THE 1970'S

by

Dr. Keats Sparrow

I recall a proverbial story I heard as an undergraduate that may have significance for the English teacher of the 1970's. The story is as follows: A veteran high school English teacher approached her principal to complain that a rookie was advancing faster than she. "After all," she concluded, "I do have ten years of experience." The principal's laconic riposte was: "Your problem is you have ten years of the same experience."

Only since I began teaching in the Special Admissions Program at East Carolina have I understood how much like that veteran most of us university composition teachers are. From time to time, we turn to new, supposedly improved textbooks; we accumulate more and more stacks of bewildering handouts; we conceive of clever, more relevant theme topics; we shift our emphases from in-class to out-of-class themes; and we then congratulate ourselves on the improvement of our teaching methods. But, however conscientious our motives, our attempts at improvement have not been commensurate with the challenges that economic necessity and the concomitant democratization of higher education have given us in the 1970's. For as our enrollments have been bolstered with marginal achievers and underachievers requiring radical new strategies, we find that many of our timeworn assumptions about effective teaching no longer hold true.

I for one have thus become an apostate of the old order and have made some radical shifts in my classroom strategies so that I might reach students whom in times past I would have deemed hopeless. For assistance, I have

sometimes borrowed teaching innovations used by two-year college English teachers, who for several years now have been successful in helping students with learning disabilities. I would like to share with you some of those approaches that have proven effective in helping underachievers learn to write with competence.

First, the aborted writing development of many students can be blamed in part on their belief that the ability to write well serves no strictly utilitarian end. For example, many students see no relationship between knowing how to write and speak with some degree of sophistication and being a successful accountant, businessman, technician, nurse, or whatever. Much evidence exists however, that points up a real relationship between being able to write well and being able to succeed in areas of endeavour outside the teaching of English. All too often, though, the writing teacher (even the old veteran) has not been exposed, during his undergraduate and post-graduate concentration on matters purely aesthetic, to the body of evidence portraying the ability to write with a high degree of sophistication as a marketable commodity and the ability to handle language gracefully as a status symbol--considerations far more compelling to a semiliterate than cliches about writing well being the prime factor in a liberal education. Here, then, are some points and resources you might utilize at the beginning of a new term in order to motivate members of your class into wanting to learn to write well.

First, a student's specialty may get him a job; but without the ability to write and speak well, the new employee may find a low ceiling prohibiting his advancement. The reason? Because as one moves up the chain of command, the greater his credentials depend upon his ability to communicate. In

fact, study after study has shown that top executives throughout the nation's largest corporations and governmental agencies spend about 90% of their time writing and speaking. In effect, this means that if you're, say, a competent accountant who cannot communicate well, you may stay in the accounting department the rest of your life. If you're an accountant who can communicate reasonably well, you may become the head of the accounting division. But if you're an accountant who can communicate very well, you may become the president or chairman of the board of the corporation for which you work. For verbal ability increases in importance and technical ability (such as accounting) decreases in importance as you rise toward the top in business and industry.

Of course, when an English teacher proposes such a utilitarian side of learning to write well, his students are understandably skeptical. Perhaps it is effective, then, to turn to leaders outside of academia for evidence. And many such leaders have addressed themselves to the issue.

For example, Peter Drucker, probably the most respected management consultant in the country, and author of the widely read books Practice of Management, Managing for Results, and The Efficient Executive, writes as follows:

> What can you learn in college that will help you in being an employee? The schools teach a great many things of value to the future accountant, the future doctor, or the future electrician. Do they also teach anything of value to the future employee? The answer is: "Yes--they teach the one thing that is perhaps most valuable for the future employee to know. But very few students bother to learn it."
>
> This one basic skill is the ability to organize and express ideas in writing and in speaking.
>
> As an employee you work with and through other people. This means that your success as an employee--and I am talking of much more here than getting promoted--will depend on your ability to communicate with people and to present your own thoughts and ideas to them so they will

understand what you are driving at and be persuaded. The letter, the report, the memorandum, the ten-minute spoken "presentation" to a committee are basic tools of the employee. ("How to Be an Employee," Fortune, May 1952)

Similarly, Gilbert W. Chapman, President of the Yale and Towne Manufacturing Company, argues that

> The executive of today will have to think clearly and systematically . . . . The corporation can teach the trainee the facts of credit and finance, but there just aren't the time or the facilities to teach him to attack problems logically . . . . [T]he ability to write is as important as the ability to read [because] management is deeply involved in the art of communication and often success and profit depend upon it . . . . [So] without the ability to read intelligently and write coherently, the young man is not a prospect for executive responsibility. (Toward the Liberally Educated Executive)

Moreover, personal experiences having to do with those who have paid the consequences for not being able to write or speak with competence are also convincing to students. I cited two such instances in a memo sent to faculty members throughout the college where I taught in 1966:

> A high school official stated recently that an alumnus of this college serving on his faculty was to be replaced by an alumnus of another college as soon as one became available. The decision of the official was not based on any lack of training in the graduate's teaching field [sociology], but rather on the inability of the graduate to communicate clearly in writing and speaking.
>
> The same inability is a handicap to many other alumni of this college. For example, a local firm interviewing our graduates decided to employ an English major instead of a person trained in the skills directly related to the position. [The "local firm" was a bank.] The officials of the firm could train a man in the specialized skills necessary for the job, but they could not train a specialist to speak and write correctly.

As teachers, you may wish to know that this memo ended as follows:

> Proper, effective English is requisite for success in every field; but our students often do not maintain competence in English after completing their English requirements, largely because of a laxity of writing standards in many other courses. The faculty senate has passed a proposal which requests the faculty (1) to administer essay tests and examinations and (2) to lower grades for lapses from conventional usage, such as misspelled words, incorrect punctuation, vague pronoun

reference, faulty parallelism, lack of agreement between subject and verb, and absence of unity in organization.

By complying with the senate's proposal, each faculty member will protect the future of his students as well as the future of this college.

Aside from its utility in achieving career goals, the ability to write and speak well is also important in social and civic aspirations. Of course, here too the impulse of the English teacher is to turn to what is most familiar to him as evidence. And certainly the fact that Mrs. Malaprop's education in the use of her tongue is not commensurate with her intellectual pretensions, or the fact that Eliza Doolittle's astronomical social success is contingent upon her having learned to speak according to educated usage, or the fact that ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen has the status of dominating Twenty-seventh Air Force Headquarters by virtue of running its communications--all are appropriate and engaging arguments. But perhaps the best evidence for convincing the skeptical is that spelled out through exposition rather than through fiction.

Thus I refer you to Sociologist Vance Packard's "Behavior that Gives Us Away" from The Status Seekers, a chapter that attests eloquently to the efficacy of initiated usage in American social circles. I also refer you to Michael E. Adelstein's Contemporary Business Writing, the first chapter of which is entitled "The What and Why of Business Writing." There Adelstein maintains that

> The art of writing well is valuable not only in business but also in personal and social life. As a member of a church, an individual may assume some responsibile position in its administration. As a member of a political party, he may serve the local, state, or national organization in some capacity. As a resident of a community, he may work with a charity, join a civic organization, or participate in a neighborhood homeowner's association. As a parent, he may become active in PTA, Scouting, and Little League work. And as a social individual, he may join a golf, athletic, bridge,

> bowling, or dance group. All of these organizations generally elect officers, solicit funds, hold meetings, sponsor affairs, plan campaigns, write newsletters, and engage in correspondence. The role a person plays in these groups and the success he attains depend greatly upon his ability to communicate well. And, usually, his accomplishments in community affairs will aid his business career. (p. 6)

Many such testimonials may be found in journals appealing to pedagogical audiences: Saturday Review, The English Journal, The American Scholar, and the like. And although I have not run across a bibliography on the subject, a few of the more recent technical and business writing texts cite such statements in a chapter (usually the first one) answering the question, "Why such a course as this you're studying?". An effective approach, of course, would be to place Xerox copies of motivational articles on reserve or, better yet, to run off a sheet or two of key excerpts for students to read and ponder in class. Whatever your approach, you'll find an hour spent on motivating students into wanting to learn the essential skills you're about to impart to them to be one of the most important you'll spend at work during the term.

Another strategy I use in trying to help low achievers overcome their attitudinal problems is to rid them of the notion, held by so many, that the physical and intellectual act of writing is more excruciatingly painful, troublesome, and time-consuming for them than it is for other students--or, for that matter, than it is for anyone else. How many students believe that they have no "knack" or "talent" for writing because for them writing comes so hard! I try to counter this misapprehension in several ways. First, I conduct free-for-all grievance sessions during which members of the class gripe about how long it took them, and how frustrating it was, to compose the last essay. Naturally, everyone present soon learns that his

problems are not unique and particular but usual and universal. Moreover, I recount to my students the many stories of professional writers who found the act of composing so difficult that they had to resort to extreme measures to get their writing done. I tell them, for example, about William Faulkner, who found writing so difficult that from time to time his wife and editors are supposed to have locked him in a room with pen and paper in order to make him write. I tell them about Hemingway, who so enjoyed the gratification of his physical appetites that he often forced himself to write between dawn and noon in order that he could have his afternoons and evenings free for drinking and eating, fishing and wenching. I tell them about Pope and Coleridge, for whom the act of composition became so meddlesome an affair that it often continued into their sleep and interfered with their rest. And I recount to them my own woes over writing, telling them of the time I spent two weeks on one paragraph or of the time I spent a month on a particularly stubborn book review. Thus, I manage to exorcise from them a debilitating inferiority complex that tends to stifle their hopes for achieving proficiency in writing.

A third strategy I borrowed directly from some of my more progressive colleagues in the two-year colleges. That strategy is to assign non-punitive grades to the first four of the eight essays each student usually writes for me during a term. In other words, while the first four essays are mandatory, the grades I assign to them do not count toward the final grade. Since the student has almost half the term to learn how to write before his efforts begin to have significance for his term mark, he does not become discouraged over grading on what he does not know--and should not be expected to know. Rather, he becomes encouraged at the prospect of learning how to write before

he is to be penalized for not knowing how. The seeming drawback to this approach is that students will not work at full potential unless there is an inherent reward for each composition. But I have found that drawback to be more apparent than real. Most students take advantage of this opportunity because for the first time in a writing course they have a chance to learn by trial and error with impunity. Yet as a safeguard, I require that unsatisfactory performances be revised until I judge them satisfactory.

The next strategy is one I had considered sound long before my involvement in the Special Admissions Program. But the freedom allowed teachers in the new program at East Carolina offered the first chance to test my belief. That belief is that composition courses should be mainly writing courses and not mainly introduction-to-literature courses. Many courses in freshman composition have lost sight of their central purpose, to develop students' writing abilities. So instead of dealing largely with writing problems and writing practice, those courses deal largely with the reading, analysis, and interpretation of essays, poems, short stories, novels, and plays. Rather than reading just eight or ten such works per term, students find themselves reading 20 or 30 essays or short stories or 50 to 100 poems--but writing only two, three, or four essays! Not that reading is a wasteful endeavor for a fledgling writer: On the contrary, deep and wide reading is eminently helpful and provocative. But as most students and seasoned teachers will admit when they are prodded to think about it, the most effective way to develop writing skills is through writing, through being professionally criticized, through trial and error, through discussions and advice about overcoming writing problems, and through studying mechanics, tone, unity, usage, and the like in composition texts. To ignore such fundamentals in a composition class in favor of the delights of good reading and lively discussion of that reading is to abnegate the real

responsibility we have to our composition students. (No wonder that many of our third quarter freshmen still have no inkling of what a governing thesis is--or, for that matter, a misplaced modifer, a comma fault, a subordinated sentence, a unified paragraph, or the difference between an idiom and a cliche.) I might note as I leave this point that largely because the emphasis in my experimental course has been on writing rather than reading, the students have learned more about writing than most of those I have taught in the past. And because the subject of writing has its own built-in excitement, the classroom sessions have been not a whit less lively than if we had been discussing Portnoy's Complaint.

Still another shift I have found to be productive is the avoidance of English teacher jargon as I teach the class. I deliberately try to find workaday synonyms for what otherwise seems Greek to the student. Thus, I say "misplaced modifier" rather than "dangling modifier," "sentence structure" rather than "syntax," "word accuracy" rather than "diction," "emotional overtone" rather than "connotation," "worn-out expression" rather than "cliché." And, since most of us learn better through example than through precept, I try to give an example of problem immediately after explaining that problem. I try to choose examples that create as much levity as possible in order that the learning process be more palatable and less agonizing for the students. Hence, when I try to get them to tighten syntax, or to move modifiers closer to that which they modify, I point out how ludicrous they would appear if they inadvertently emulated the man who ran a want ad that should have read "wanted: chairs with built-in padding for secretaries" but that read instead "wanted: chairs for secretaries with built-in padding." In explaining unity, I tell them about the student whose essay on the topic

"The Most Interesting Person I Know" concluded with the statement, "My roomate is so boring that he's really not worth writing about." In discussing idiom, I show them a newspaper picture of a former governor and U. S. senator addressing students at a law school in 1968. The caption reads: "Former Governor _____ _____ tells law student body, 'I cannot conceive a draft dodger.'" Perhaps the most amusing example of faulty word choice is an off-color statement a student wrote in a Shakespeare class. He innocently observed, "Romeo opened Juliet's tomb with his wenching bar."

The sixth and concluding strategy I have found effective for helping those with writing disabilities encompasses the five I've already mentioned. This strategy involves changing the unproductive attitudes of students and teachers alike. We need to correct the wrongheaded notion held by so many of those with writing deficiencies that the ability to write and speak well is a profitless commodity. And we need to show them that such an ability is not a commodity exclusive with a few who are genetically prepared to own it. As for ourselves, we need to unbend our notorious methods for imparting our commodity so that more students will become favorably disposed to it and will undergo the rigors required for its mastery. We need to realize that poor writing is not necessarily a sign of low intelligence. We need to rectify our false notion that a semiliterate is a hopeless case, unworthy of special time-consuming ministrations, and doomed to eternal babbling. Most important, we need to reassess our take-it-or-leave-it attitude toward our students and find a replacement for the anachronistic rubric: "Those who can will; those who can't won't." Until we begin to believe that "with a little help from us,

those who otherwise can't might," we smack too much of that atrophied teacher who, her conscientious efforts notwithstanding, has far too many years of the same stultifying experience.

FRESHMAN COMPOSITION: A COURSE CONCEPTUALIZATION

by

Mrs. Ruth Fleming

One of the central functions of the secondary school English conferences is to provide articulation between the secondary schools and the post-secondary schools. Though certainly all of your students do not go on for further education--in fact, those with the most serious learning disabilities rarely do go--many of the students in your classes will attend colleges or technical institutes. The learning disabilities that hamper these students when they come to East Carolina are undoubtedly problems that also trouble you. Thus a discussion of students' major learning problems encountered in composition classes at ECU and how we deal with those problems can possibly help you in two ways:

1. You can perhaps pinpoint areas in composition skills that might be emphasized for students planning to continue their education.
2. Some of the methods described here can be helpful to students at any level who have learning disabilities.

I. The Comp Course: Situation and Complexities

The English 001 (freshman composition) section that I am teaching this fall differs somewhat from previous sections. The students in the class are categorized as "Special Admissions" and they will spend anywhere from their first quarter to their first year in what might be termed developmental studies, though their course credits and numbers are generally no different from those of other freshmen. They represent my university's first move toward the open door, since all are students who, for one reason or another, do not meet standard

admission requirements. They spend approximately twice the hours in class that regularly admitted freshmen do, though their credit hour load is somewhat lighter, and they are homogeneously grouped in all academic classes rather than placed in regular sections. Provisions made within the English Department for these students include selecting the best qualified of a group of volunteers to teach them, providing funds (thought meager) for purchase of multi-media materials, limiting class size to twenty students, allowing instructors freedom not only in approach, but also in text selection, and providing teachers additional time to work with students in conferences or however they desire.

One basic problem in the initial course design for these students was that we knew very little about them, except that they did not meet admission requirements. Exactly how far they fell below standards was an unknown quantity. We did know that the racial balance was consistent with that of the entire university, contrary to expectations that the program would attract a large number of minority students. Based even on the scanty data available, there were several predictions I felt safe in making as I planned for the group who would join me in September: they would be deficient in verbal skills and they would know it, thus undermining confidence about writing; and they would be very much aware of the "Special Admissions" label as they moved through their classes somewhat outside the mainstream of campus life. They would enter English 001 feeling somewhat inadequate in general, and especially inadequate in English in particular. Obviously, then, one "learning disability," if I may use that term in this context, is the negative attitude toward language arts that my students would be likely to have.

However, many of them could have strong motivations to do well in a college career that they perhaps viewed as a last chance. A receptiveness to new approaches to composition, then, might be coupled with their basic dislike to it.

As I proceeded with my course design for these students, I tried to reconcile their needs in composition with my basic beliefs about teaching it. First, I believe that writing should reveal the voice of the writer and should be a real experience in sharing communication if it is to be valued by the writer or by his audience (a corollary to this concept is that we are willing to work at or for that which we value). Second, I believe that skills acquired in a composition class should be practical ones that the student will use in his college career and later in his personal and professional life. However, the course must meet not only my criteria, but also the departmental standards: the student will be able to write a unified, coherent, grammatically correct essay of three to five pages organized around a central thesis sentence. I must reconcile this success criterion to my basic agreement with Ken MacRorie's belief that "No one outside school writes anything called themes. Apparently they are teachers' exercises, not a kind of communication."

Out of this complex set of factors (and the sketch given of them here is certainly oversimplified), I needed to develop a course that met the students' needs, was consistent with my own philosophy, and satisfied English departmental standards. No favor is done to the students if the skills and attitudes they acquire in English 001 cannot be carried successfully beyond that classroom.

II. Setting the Scene: "Where Are We Going"

The general goals and objectives for freshman composition should reflect the beliefs to which I adhere regarding the importance of attitude in writing and the practicality of skills to be learned, as well as the needs of the students and the standards of the department. The following general course goals that I settled upon are arranged in order of priority:

English 001 General Course Goals

The student will, upon completion of English 001:

1. Express a more favorable disposition towards "composition" or the writing process;

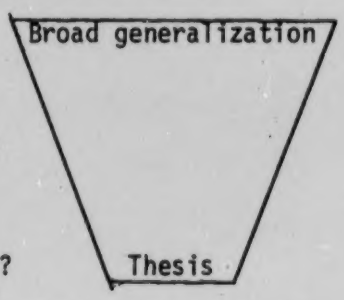
and be able to:

2. Write in his "own voice" or out of the personal set of values and attitudes that are unique to him.
3. Use the voice he has discovered through free-flow writing activities in simulated exam essay questions, short research papers, business letters, critical reviews, and so on.
4. Assess his audience, recognizing that it may be just himself, to determine purpose, style, and the amount of editing or proofreading required.
5. Organize his writing to best express his ideas for the audience he has in mind.
6. Use various resources to make necessary editorial and copy changes.
7. Use a check-list to examine the basic structure of a finished assignment. (see the following)

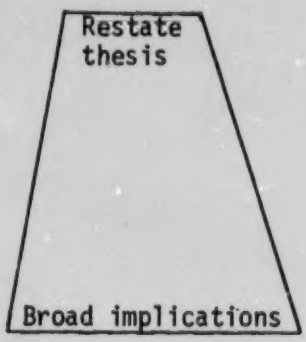
A Check List For Essays

-Sheridan Baker, The Practical Stylist

a. Thesis stated in one sentence? ("What's the big idea?")
b. Thesis at end of first paragraph?
c. Thesis clearly evident throughout paper?
d. Each paragraph begun with topic sentence?
e. Each with transitional tag?
f. Each at least four or five sentences long?
g. Your best point last?
h. Conclusion an inverted funnel?
i. Sentences show some variety?
j. No passive, no There is . . .?
k. Commas before every and and but that needs them?
l. A comma before every which?
m. Every which without comma changed to that?
n. Every excess that dropped?
o. Every noun-noun and tion-of revised? (publication of for publish)
p. All excess wordage cut?
q. Any sentence that could be misread?
r. Can you say it more briefly and clearly?



Introductory Funnel



Inverted Funnel: Conclusion

8. Use a mechanical formula to check the basic paragraph structure. (see the following)

Paragraph Check List

a. Underline your thesis twice.

b. Underline the topic sentence of each paragraph once.

c. Circle all transitional connectives between paragraphs.

d. [1]Number the sentences in each paragraph to be sure that you have adequate development.

e. Label the sections of your paper introduction, body, and conclusion.

9. Edit and proofread his work so that it meets the standards of his audience.

Again, these are general course goals, not specific unit objectives, but they encompass the essential aspects of the course and provide a sense of direction and priorities.

To Further set the scene, some comments about class procedure are in order. The course emphasizes both attitudes toward and performance of writing, but not learning rules about writing. Therefore, some writing activity is included during each class session, perhaps only in the form of free-flow writing. In addition, no "grades" per se were assigned until the student was ready to submit several writing endeavors to me for graded evaluation, although many non-graded evaluations were done. Ideally no papers should be submitted for grades until after the first five weeks of the quarter. However, since insecure students often feel even more insecure without written proof that they are making progress, points are given for completing assignments. The students, in effect, individualize their efforts by

deciding in part what their objectives for each week are. Possible point totals vary from student to student, and each student is measured against the objectives that he and I have decided upon for him.

The class is conducted generally in workshop fashion, with the basic approach being one that divides "writing" into composing (putting the words on paper), editing (working with style and structure), and proofreading (making corrections in grammar, syntax, mechanics, and spelling). That order is followed in the course, with initial emphasis placed on getting ideas from our heads onto paper. I, in essence, function as an advisory editor, making suggestions for improvement. The environment is relaxed, initiated by circling the desks, encouraging casual seating arrangements, talking over class concerns among students, and learning more about each other. Within an environment that is open and non-punitive, the students express themselves more freely orally and in writing that they are willing to share with the whole class or with one or two members of it. Attitudes are favorably influenced by such a setting. There is an accompanying desire to improve writing skills if writing is seen to be an important part of sharing, of one human being communicating himself, as well as his message, to another.

III. Getting Into It: Where Do We Start?

Pre-assessment occurred during the first several class meetings through class discussion, word associations, individual force-field analysis, and writing samples. After getting to know each other by using a variety of word games, a discussion of group expectations for the course and of my expectations of them was next on the agenda. Word associations including ultimately words such as "English," "composition,"

"writing," revealed basic attitudes that the students held toward the subject. Individual force-field analysis simply involves having the students list on one side of a piece of paper strengths that they perceive in their written communication and listing weaknesses that they believe themselves to have in another column. Stars are placed by skills strong enough that they wish to maximize them; asterisks are placed by those deficiencies on which the student believes he needs special work. These analyses are useful in establishing individual weekly objectives (such as working on spelling or punctuation) that the class as a whole will not have.

A writing sample was assessed simply by having the students write on a specified topic for fifteen minutes. Rather than grading or marking the sample (which was simply an entry in the free-flow journal), I discussed the writing with each student, pointing out strong points as well as those that needed work. Additionally, two "essays" were written for evaluation by departmental graders.

By this point, I had a good idea of the attitudes and skills my students held in relation to the ones that I desired them ultimately to have. The students also had a good idea of where they were in composition. The learning activities for the course, limited only by the imagination, were designed to enable the students to reach the desired attitudes and objectives. Many activities are suitable, but all should be designed with the desired skills and attitudes in mind.

IV. How Was the Trip?: Teacher/Student Evaluation

Assessing changes in attitudes crucial to my objectives will occur in subtle and necessarily subjective ways. Are the students writing more? Do they exhibit excitement when talking about their writing with

me or with other students? Does the emergence of a personal voice in their own writing reveal a sensitive perception of the real meaning of communication? Do they express verbally a shift in their opinion of composition? Is class attendance good, with students bringing in materials for group discussion? By posing questions such as these, basic shifts in attitude can be assessed. More formally, a questionnaire could be designed to detect changes in attitude, without phrasing questions in terms that reveal that attitudes are being assessed. Such a questionnaire, presented to the students after the first three or four weeks of class and again at the end of the quarter, would provide feedback for me to see what modifications are needed in my approach or what strategies are most successful.

One of the most sensitive points in the composition course, however, is that at which the teacher must evaluate the student's writing. Too many students have had their confidences destroyed when papers in which they attempted to communicate experiences that were very real to them were returned splotched with red marks on spelling and mechanical errors, but including no reaction to the experience itself. In my evaluation of student papers I operate on the premise of responding to them as a person. Specifically, these responses might include relating my own feelings on the subject, sharing a similar experience, or suggesting new or related directions in writing for the student to explore. These responses are not the same as proofreading; in fact, a proofreader is one thing that I do not intend to be. Initially, mechanical errors were virtually overlooked. Later, errors were circled or notations made of problems for the student to work on, not for me to correct. Students can also use other students proficient in

these mechanical skills, dictionaries, or handbooks to make corrections. As instructor, I primarily function as advisory editor, suggesting new sources of material, new approaches to material, or alternate means of arranging materials.

Another basic premise upon which evaluation is based is that any piece of writing should reveal that a unique person wrote it. To determine whether or not a student is using his "own voice" in any piece of writing, I look primarily for a sense of excitement and quality of sincerity in what he has written. The tone and vigor revealed in the paper will show whether or not the writing has been a productive, reasonably enjoyable experience for the student. If the student's voice is not coming through, I must ask what I, the assignment, or the classroom environment could be doing to stifle that voice. Alternate assignments that the student would prefer to do and in which he may discover his own voice should be settled upon once the student is informed that he is not "coming through" and is shown exactly what is meant by expressing himself through his writing.

Specific points considered in evaluation of student papers include the following: English jargon is avoided insofar as possible in comments; rather, all suggestions are made operational; proofreading is viewed as something to be done quickly and efficiently rather than the ultimate step in composition; students are encouraged to serve as each other's editors; students are encouraged to talk to me and to each other while engaged in the writing process; and assessment is based on the present situation, not on writing that will be done in the future, thus focusing concentration on the problems at hand that need correction.

The ultimate decision about the student's grade will come out of a conference between the student and me and our mutual assessment of how well he has met objectives set for the course and for himself.

One factor that I realize I must guard against is having the students think that the course is "Micky Mouse" simply because it is enjoyable. The skills taken from this course in English 001 must be comparable to the skills acquired in the more traditional sections of English 001, for these skills will be demanded in English 002, in later courses, and in later life. I believe that the same skills can be learned better if methods are used that attend to student attitudes and that allow the writing experience to be an enjoyable one. If the students enjoy writing, they will respect and value the skills required to do it well. Hopefully, this attitude will become an integral part of their value system. And, after all, what higher goal could I have than to help students come to a healthy respect for the importance of human communication, of sharing ideas important to us as individuals?

ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF REMEDIAL ENGLISH PROGRAMS

by

Dr. James Kirkland

At East Carolina University, as at most other large state universities, the student body encompasses people who come from different backgrounds and possess varied attitudes and abilities; but regardless of whether they are enrolled in the Special Admissions program or the regular freshmen English courses, our central objective is the same: to teach the essential skills of composition.

The first step in achieving this objective is an awareness of the kinds of language disabilities which most often hinder students' attainment of writing proficiency. Even a cursory review of the English Department's Writing Laboratory files and a sampling of essays from regular and Special Admissions classes suggests that students this year are having the same kinds of organizational and mechanical problems as students have experienced in the past. The main difference lies in the apparent increase in the number of such problems and the unusual, often baffling combinations in which they sometimes occur.

Although any list of specific writing disabilities is to an extent arbitrary, some of the most significant problems include grammatical weaknesses, misspelling, limited or inappropriate vocabulary, confused sentence structure, faulty organization, lack of awareness, and indirectness.

Grammatical deficiencies encompass a multitude of errors. Verbs are frequently made to agree with objects of prepositions, adjectives, or almost anything else besides the subject of the sentence, and--if current trends are any indication--the pronouns this and which may never find their antecedents.

Modifiers continue to dangle noticeably, as in this sentence which adds a mixed metaphor for good measure: "When in her presence, my heart pounded as if it was going to run away someplace." Almost as intriguing is the remark of another writer who explains that "Pulling girls' hair always brought the class alive and either got me a paddling or one of my classmates." Given a choice, most of us would likely pick a classmate rather than a spanking. The sentence fragment, too, enjoys great popularity, as does the comma splice, which is becoming increasingly hard to identify amidst the profusion of commas that many students seem to insert at random.

Creative spelling also appears to be on the increase. It is not uncommon to find five, ten, or even more misspellings in a three page essay, and one teacher recently reported having a student who had misspelled thirty words in a two page paper. Some of these problems result from the students' failure to recognize that words having similar sounds may be spelled differently in accordance with how they are used. Thus to serves as preposition, number, and intensifier, and there designates both place and possession. Mispronunciations or phonetic transcriptions also account for many spelling errors. The student who pronounces the conjunction and without the d, for example, may spell it an or ane. Similarly, a conceited person becomes conceded, and a draft dodger may be transformed into a dogger.

Whatever the reason for the misspelling, the results are often comical, thus interrupting any serious attitudes the writer may be trying to project. One student converts a church bazaar into a bizzarre afair. Another remarks that "As time goes by, elephants are becoming more and more distinct": still another writes, "Entertainment is never a problem, since I own a stereoscipic photograph"; and most of you probably never realized that Antigone's father

was King Odious. Perhaps the most telling example of all, however, is that of the student who observes, "My roomate is dumm."

Other deficiencies include a limited and generalized vocabulary, frequently combined with inappropriate word choice and redundancy. For example, one student writes, "To make a friend or be friendly." He continues, "If you and the other person have interest in common, then this can start the friendship. Interest in common could be anything that interest you both." Another writer comments, "Women seem to think that I am a shy individual and bashful of women. Perhaps this is only one of the characters that I have." The young man eventually gains confidence and at last meets a girl that he can communicate with: "We even discussed our future outlook that we both see in the future." More difficult to classify is this statement, which deals with Watergate: "There is some good people in the government that love their country, that want to help the country and its people. Watergate is a good example of this." Similar confusion marks another writer's attempt to explain that people who live in rural areas "have a general understanding in their social group so that being that don't have to make impressions keeping them clear of corruption."

Writing disabilities such as these pose some of the most serious obstacles to effective communication, but other factors are involved as well. Even if an essay is grammatically accurate, it may follow no discernible pattern of organization, and if a thesis <u>is</u> clearly stated, individual paragraphs may lack detail or relevance. Still other papers are acceptable in both organization and grammar but communicate nothing. This is especially a problem for students who seldom--if ever--read a newspaper or magazine and possess little social, cultural, or political awareness. Several years ago,

for example a faculty member informed me that she had assigned her composition class to read an essay on the war protest movement, only to discover that a number of students were unaware of this atmosphere of protest and a few had never heard of the Viet Cong. More recently another teacher assigned an argumentative essay on President Ford's amnesty plan or his pardon of Richard Nixon. She soon realized that one half the members of the class were not aware of the pardon and most could not define the word amnesty. The conversion of composition classes into crash courses in socio-political issues would not, unfortunately, remedy the problem; for such a process would reduce the amount of time available for writing instruction. But when such an intellectual vacuum does exist, the teacher must discard many ideas which could lead to meaningful and interesting essay assignments and find alternative subjects.

In other cases, weakness in content is not so much the product of inadequate information as it is the result of an unwillingness to deal specifically and precisely with the subject. In attempting to convince students of the need for directness in their writing, I frequently cite Stuart Chase's anecdote about a plumber who had been using hydrochloric acid to clean pipes and decided to write a government agency to find out whether it was safe. He received the following response: "'The efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable, but the chlorine residue is incompatible with metallic permanence.'" The plumber wrote back and said he was glad they liked his idea. Soon afterwards he received another reply: "'We cannot assume responsibility for the production of toxic and noxious residues with hydrochloric acid, and suggest that you use an alternate procedure.'" The plumber once again wrote to express how pleased he was that they still agreed.

Almost immediately he received a third letter, which said "'Don't use hydrochloric acid; it eats hell out of the pipes!'"* Technical jargon or "gobbledygook" as Chase calls it is much rarer in students' writing than the other problems which have been mentioned, but some novice writers do have a tendency to obscure ideas in a meaningless cluster of generalities and cliches.

Identifying compositional weaknesses is relatively easy. The difficulty is how to assist students in improving their writing. In addition to the Special Admissions program, two major resources for meeting this objective are currently being used in the English Department at East Carolina, a Writing Laboratory, and a flexible course structure which allows individual teachers wide latitude in responding to the needs of each class.

The Writing Laboratory is staffed by Graduate Assistants and is available to any student enrolled in one of the freshman composition courses. Because this Laboratory and others like it require a large staff, it might not be feasible for schools with small English departments, but a self-instructional approach using programmed grammar texts and such audio-visual aids as cassettes and film strips might provide a workable alternative.

Programmed texts, in fact, were used extensively in the Lab until two years ago when the structure of the Laboratory was changed, and such texts continue to be used as one of a number of resources available for student instruction.

Under the previous system, Lab students studied a self-instructional text such as English 2600 or English 3200 and were required to pass objective tests

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*Stuart Chase, "Gobbledygook," Subject and Structure, ed. John M. Wasson (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1970), pp. 332-340.

on each of the book's twelve units before they could be released. This method seemed to work very well for students who were able to complete the program, but the formal testing system coupled with the pressures of the quarter system and increasing Lab enrollment prevented many students from finishing their work on schedule and forced the Lab instructors to spend their time grading tests rather than conferring with the students.

Many of these procedures have been changed, however. Formal testing has been eliminated to provide the Lab instructors more time for conferences with individual students. In addition, the scope of the Lab has been expanded to provide assistance for students with deficiencies in any area of composition, not just grammar.

More specifically, whenever teachers determine which students have serious deficiencies they specify in writing the areas which the students should work on. The Lab instructors then use this information to design an individualized program for each person. For those with grammatical problems, workbooks such as English 3200 and the Harbrace College Workbook are still available, while for others the Lab instructor may supervise paragraphing exercises, review outlining procedures, or have the students write short papers.

The time limitations of the quarter system, unfortunately, cannot be altered, but the added flexibility of the Lab does make it possible for teachers to assign students at any time up to the sixth week of the term, provided that enough time remains for instruction in the specified areas. Also, students can now be released from the Lab whenever they have eliminated the problems for which they have been assigned. Lab instructors make preliminary recommendations for dismissal, but if the referring teacher disagrees with their judgment he may request that the student continue with the Lab.

Although the Writing Laboratory is a useful complement to the regular freshman English courses, the primary responsibility for diagnosing and helping to correct language disabilities rests with the individual teacher. Time does not permit a full evaluation of different approaches which teachers in our department have developed, but an experimental composition program which one of my colleagues, Bill Bloodworth, and I designed last spring provides an illustration of one kind of approach that can be accomodated to the existing course structure. With the exception of textbooks, which we selected in anticipation that they might have potential uses in the Special Admissions program, the course met all syllabus guidelines for English I.

In developing this course, we emphasized the following: adoption of a course structure that would encourage greater communication between teachers and students as well as alleviating the tedium of daily discussions of essays; replacement of the formalized composition text and rhetorically organized reader which are used in the regular English I class with texts which we felt might be more interesting and more adaptable to the varied backgrounds and abilities of the students; elimination of traditional grading during the first part of the quarter in favor of tests and essays which were graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis (all unsatisfactory work had to be revised until it was acceptable) in order that students would have an opportunity to master essential ideas and skills without fear of penalizing grades; and provision for using the Writing Laboratory as supplementary assistance for students with fundamental deficiences.

These objectives were implemented in several different ways:

> The class structure emphasized individual conferences, small group conferences, and individual study of material in a composition text. For the first five or six meetings, the class met as a group. For four weeks or so afterwards, though, there was usually only one meeting a week of the entire class.

During the first six or seven weeks of the quarter, the focus was on general composition skills. This study proceeded through several units based on the textbook, Steps in Composition. At the end of each unit students were required to:

a. Complete exercises as needed.
b. Take an objective examination on the material covered.
c. Write a short essay.

This work was graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. If the work in all three areas (exercises--test--essay) was not satisfactory, the students were required to repeat the test and/or the essay later.

Satisfactory completion of all of the units insured the students a minimum grade of D for English I. Whether they made only a D or earned a grade of C, B, or A was determined by all the work done in the last three or four weeks of the course. At that time the emphasis was on understanding, discussing, and writing about popular arts (films, music, journalism, etc.).

During this study of the popular arts, classes usually met twice a week, the other meeting being devoted to independent reading and conferences.

Writing assignments were always correlated with reading selection, both to reinforce class discussions and to provide students with an accessible body of information which could be used in their essays. For example, after studying a chapter on advertising in the text Mass Media and the Popular Arts, students were asked to write an essay of 500-700 words on such topics as the following:

1. Advertisements often appeal to sexual desire rather than reason.
2. Advertisements often appeal to the human need for prestige.
3. Some ad campaigns try to anger the consumer so that he will remember the product.
4. Identification with nature (or with the ecology movement) is a recent and widespread advertising technique.
5. Ultrabrite commercials advertise sex rather than toothpaste.
6. The Tab advertisement reinforces conventional sex roles.
7. The advertisements in Playboy reinforce the Playboy "philosophy." (This topic, of course, would require an explanation of this "philosophy.")
8. The advertisements in Playgirl (or in Ms.) reinforce the magazine's philosophy.

Similarly, a discussion of another chapter on cartooning led to parallel writing assignments:

1. Compare two or more characters in a single comic strip (e.g. Lucy and Charlie Brown)

2. Discuss the purposes of humor in a single comic strip (e.g. what different types of people, organizations, etc. does Al Capp satirize in Lil' Abner?)
3. Explain a specific cartoonist's attitude toward one of the following subjects (or if you prefer, choose a subject that is not listed):
   politics (e.g. Lil' Abner, Doonesbury, Pogo)
   love (e.g. Juliet Jones, B.C., Prince Valiant)
   the military (e.g. Beetle Bailey, Steve Canyon)
   family life, or individual roles within the family - e.g. husband, wife, etc. (e.g. Dagwood, Juliet Jones)
   race relationships (e.g. Beetle Bailey)
   guilt, Frustration } e.g. Peanuts
   conflict between good and evil (e.g. The Phantom, Little Orphan Annie, Dick Tracy).

Although the number of sections was too small for meaningful statistical evaluation, our first hand observations of the program's results were very encouraging. The increased conference time enabled us to gain deeper insights to the students' individual writing problems. Especially valuable was the opportunity for pre-planning and close supervision of revisions. These factors plus the students' freedom from the pressure of grades during the time they were still developing basic skills often resulted in increased confidence about their ability to write and, in fact, led to dramatic improvement in the quality of their writing. Also, partly because of the course's flexibility and partly because of appealing reading assignments, student interest seemed to improve, and with it the productivity of the group discussions that were held.

Because individual teachers do have different personalities and instructional approaches, no single approach will ever be suitable for everyone. For this very reason, it is important for us to have an opportunity to share ideas, and the Language Arts Conference provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to communicate with colleagues from different schools and regions.

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR MODERN LIVING

by

Mrs. Janice Faulkner

For ten or fifteen years now, you have been hearing a great deal about the "new" linguistics, transformational grammar, and the linguistic approach to your teaching of the language arts. No matter what you call it, most of your applications of the new linguistic theories of language have concentrated on its form. You show students that a sentence consists of a noun phrase plus a verb phrase, and you ask them to make distinctions between kernal sentences and transformations. Unfortunately, while you were being encouraged by your supervisors to stress linguistic applications to the forms of language, you have been forced to neglect the vital functions of language, the uses of it made necessary by the demands of everyday living. This change in emphasis is regrettable, because knowledge about how to use language is more crucial to your students with learning disabilities than knowledge about its origins and its forms. The result is that teachers have lost sight of the fact that language is a living, growing organism, and that students have never become aware that it is.

In order to make our students aware of the ways in which language functions in the society, we must make them aware of the social and psychological constraints upon language, aware of the social settings in which language is used, and of nonverbal means of communication, all of which vary according to cultural differences, and all of which have a powerful influence on their own effectiveness in the use of language.

We now have sufficiently detailed records of the history of language to know something about how it works and to, within limits, plot its future in

our culture. There are certain fundamental principles that we must keep in mind. One of the most important is that language has always changed and that it always will. Language change may result from corruption, but mainly it results from growth. The old adage that necessity is the mother of invention is nowhere more applicable than it is to the growth of language. The space age, the civil rights movement, medical research, women's liberation--all of these social phenomena have brought about change in our language. Our language is adaptable; that is, it is functional in the context in which it is needed.

Another principle related to this flexibility in language is that language changes at varying rates. Some aspects, like the grammar of the language, change very slowly. Others, like usage, change very rapidly. Drifts in language tend then to be consistent. In general, a change that starts quickly can stop quickly. One that is slow to build up, will be slow to stop. We can be very specific about this aspect of language. English has been, since the beginning of our history as a people, a growing language. It has expanded because it has moved into new and sparsely settled lands and because it has been the language of an ever burgeoning people. This sort of growth from within will continue; for inevitably, non-linguistic events have had and will continue to have impact. Since the historic Supreme Court decision of 1954 in Brown versus The Board of Education, English speaking people in America have been exposed to widely varying dialects, unfamiliar syntactic order, and numerous unfamiliar grammatical constructions. Intergration has broadened our awareness of the differences in the ways in which blacks and whites use the English Language; and we now take into account the fact that the English is not one language, but a composite of several systems of language, each with its own phonology, its own syntax, and its own grammar.

Let us consider for a moment the impact that integration has had on our own problems with the language arts. We know that disadvantaged children, black, white, gold, or green, need to learn standard English. Our attempts to teach them standard English fail because of further assumptions that we make about nonstandard dialects. We equate nonstandard English with low intelligence the same way that we equate the illiterate speech of a country farmer with low intelligence. The rest of the nation treats a southern accent the same way. A southern accent to an educated Yankee is a sure sign of stupidity.

Another false assumption about the language of disadvantaged children is that these children are nonverbal. Taken literally, this means that they are without language. However, the vast majority of children with learning disabilities are restricted neither in their language development nor in their employment of language. The majority of them have total facility to use nonstandard English effectively in their primary culture group. The fact that they do not use standard English does not make them nonverbal. Outside the classroom, they exhibit linguistic behavior that identified them as highly verbal children. For example, young children play games that use jingles and poems, and they chant rhymes and riddles. Members of the black subculture in your own high schools probably play a verbal game called bantering. Blacks learn bantering at an early age, and they learn it from their elders. In essence, verbal bantering is the skillful and humorous use of language to "put down" another person. When that other person is one's mother or female friend, bantering is called "playing the dozens." All black youngsters, especially males, know how to do it. But none of them would do it in the presence of a white English teacher. Another verbal skill that young blacks

exhibit is "pimp talk." Pimp talk is simply the affixing of a nonsense syllable to certain syllables in a word. Children who are nonverbal would never be so skillful or inventive. They are not nonverbal. They are not even verbally inferior. They are simply different.

Possessing a different set of linguistic habits, the disadvantaged child builds up regional or ethnic defense mechanisms that are hard for the classroom teacher to break through. And as distracting as these defenses are, they are not the main obstacle to effective teaching. A worse problem is our assumption that the child who deviates from classroom expectation has failed, and that we can help such children by exposing them to more intensive doses of the same instruction until they finally see the light. Such an approach is like shouting English into the ears of a foreigner on the grounds that the louder it is, the better chance he has to understand it.

Social or geographic isolation encourages the development and maintenance of the social norm in both language and in other kinds of cultural behavior. Once we understand that environment has reinforced linguistic behavior, then we can approach it with more understanding. The child who is a chronic failure in the classroom may not be inattentive, lazy, malicious, or mentally deficient. He may instead be confused by two conflicting norms of linguistic behavior. In terms of teaching language, this means that the problem pupil is not so much verbally destitute as he is mixed up about his own nonstandard English and its kinship with that his teacher is trying to force him to adopt. The child who comes to school speaking a nonstandard dialect will have chronic difficulty learning the correct use of many standard English patterns in both his reading and his writing, and he will be very slow to give up his speaking habits. For they are the means by which he has established his identity in his own cultural group.

Let us consider for a moment why this should be true. What does language do for us?

We are all born totally inarticulate. In his book, The Mature Mind, H. A. Overstreet points out that the person who remains linguistically undeveloped remains isolated from his fellow man. He writes:

> In a peculiar sense man is born alone. As he matures, he will build word linkages between himself and his world. Most children soon learn to talk the language of the people around them. Yet few of them continue their verbal maturing throughout life . . . . In no area of our maturing, in fact, is arrested development more common that in the area of communication. It is so common that it is not even noticed; it is taken for granted as natural. The person who is mature in his communicative powers is noted as the exception to the rule. The person who is immature--halting, clumsy, obscure, rambling, dull, platitudinous, insensitive--is the rule.

Language is a very personal possession to an individual; his own self-concept is closely related to his speech. Criticism of his pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar damages his self-respect. We use language to determine economic class, region, educational level, and mistakenly, intelligence and character. It is a hard thing for a youngster to discover that the language he uses at home and in his own neighborhood is "bad", and he will resist adopting a new speech pattern, even that of an envied majority of other students, if abandoning what he already knows will create an identity crisis for himself.

Social variation in language is a linguistic fact of life, a fact that many teachers overlook, even though it faces them daily, not only in their pupils' speech but in their own. The language we use varies with the situation. A teacher talks one way to her principal, another way to her fellow teachers, still another way to her students, and yet another to their parents. Miss Fidditch might say to her principal, "Hubert is a constant disrupter in class."; to Hubert's parents, "Hubert has some difficulty settling down to do his work"; to her fellow teachers in the lounge, "that kid is driving me nuts with his yackity-yacking" and to Hubert himself, "Hubert, shut up."

This varying of language forms to fit different situations is known as register change or switching. A register is a set of linguistic forms used in a given social circumstance. Each register may be signaled by changes in phonology, syntax, and lexicon (or vocabulary.) An individual speaker usually controls a range of registers that extends from very informal to formal ones, and, if a person is literate, it includes both oral and written registers.

The range of registers under control varies from individual to individual. Age, education, and socioeconomic status influence a person's range. The teacher of language arts who is realistic will help her students to master a wider range of registers. She will not reject the limited register that limited linguistic experience has provided. She will instead, build on it, expand it, provide an environment for further experimentation and experience, and thus educate her pupils so that they can function linguistically in a wider social context.

The concept of register seems particularly important for teachers who have pupils from cultures different from their own. Teachers need to discard negative attitudes toward variation in language use. The first step toward developing a more positive approach may be to understand that so-called standard English and the language of culturally different children both consist of sets of registers in which the various linguistic forms are shared.

Studying the language arts is really learning how to extend the range of registers and learning how to control more of the so-called standard forms under a wide variety of circumstances that call for their mastery.

Traditionally, schools have understood that part of their task is to get students to speak and write properly, where "properly" is defined by whatever it is that characterizes the language of the middle class. They

have not been successful in that endeavor. A few individuals assimilate "proper" speech and writing habits, but most go on speaking and writing the way they would have if the schools had never been invented, just as they go on ignoring the plays and books and art and music that the schools also concern themselves with.

What then, is the teacher to do? For a start, we can let students talk. The more they talk, the better they get at it. They can learn give and take in oral language. The skills of speaking and listening are covered by a term you may or may not know. It is oracy. Oracy is not a subject. It is rather a condition of learning in all subjects. The word itself was coined in 1965 in connection with the work of a research team on speech in the Birmingham University School of Education. It is a term for the skills of speaking and listening which parallels the term "literacy" which we use to refer to the skills of reading and writing.

The English teacher who has despaired of teaching reading and writing has a special opportunity for providing a rich variety of speaking and listening situations. A child learns language by being in a situation which calls his language skills forth. We can get on with the job of teaching the English language if we take advantage of the classroom situation. The air is full of talk. Without talk there is no listening. Without listening there is no talk. Most of what we know is relayed without the benefit of print. If you are worried that your students can't read, then I would ask you. "How do you personally get most of your information, your pleasure, your inspiration? How many books did you read last year? What did you see this morning in the newspaper that you hadn't already heard on the radio or the television?"

The truth of the matter is that most of us are no longer readers. We are talkers and listeners. There is not a lot of help that reading and writing will

give to youngsters who have no motivation to break out of their present cultural environment. But there is a great deal of help that talking and listening can give them. They can learn through experience in these skills to become efficient, critical thinkers. In order for communication to take place, two processes are necessary: Encoding, that is, speaking and writing; and decoding, that is, listening and reading. The speech-listening process precedes by years the reading-writing one. As discouraging as it may be to face, some of your students will never master reading and writing.

Whatever the method or the materials, the teacher is still by far the most important single teaching and learning agent in the student's life. Thus as one views what is happening, it soon becomes apparent that a program will stand or fall only in terms of the commitment of teachers to their students' need to know their language. Children need to learn to talk and listen in committees, for the business of the world is run by committees. They need to learn to solve problems in groups. They need a verbal command of their language. They need to be able to give direction and to follow them, that is to talk and to listen so that they can find jobs and do them right. They need to read road maps and traffic signs, to write checks and place orders out of catalogues. They need to buy bricks and lumber by the ton and the foot, and concrete and polyester by the yard. They need to read the labels on canned goods and flour sacks and to tell you not only what's in the can, but how much and at what cost. They need to be able to read traffic tickets and the labels on medicine bottles, to tell the doctor where it hurts and the paper boy why they're deducting the cost of two issues from his bill. They need to reach the operator in an emergency and to give the policeman or the fireman an accurate fix in a crisis. These are the realities of language usage they will face. These are the things that a very good teacher can show them how to do.

His teacher is one of the few adults that a child gets to know really well, especially if he comes from a disadvantaged environment, and if he is not going to be formally enrolled in school after this year or the next. Because of this, the teacher becomes in the child's mind, a representative for the whole grown-up world. And the child, to some extent, will judge the world according to the success or failure of its representative. We are indeed, the world's representative to our pupils. What they know about that world and whether they can function in it effectively with confidence, depends in large measure upon whether we have encouraged them to broaden their linguistic experience, to talk, to listen, to read (if and when they can) and to write (as often and as well as they are able). It is a big order, but we are equal to it.

PHONOLOGY AND THE NEW ENGLISH

by

Dr. James Wright

Although language is very important to everyone, many of us tend to take it for granted, without ever pausing to think about exactly what language really is, or what it is that we are doing while we are using it. Since we use it automatically and without conscious effort, we do not concern curselves much with how it works or with the similarities and differences between the language which we speak and others which we do not. For our present discussion, we need some sort of a rough definition of 'language' to work with. We could state it as follows:

> A language is an arbitrary set of arbitrary vocal symbols which members of a community use in order to communicate and interact.

Let us consider the word 'vocal' in the above definition. Most people tend to think of language as being primarily written. If someone says a word which we do not understand, the usual strategy is to ask how the word is spelled. For example, I have frequently been asked how my last name, Wright, is spelled, although as a name in English, I have never seen it spelled any other way. It is possible that people think of language as writing rather than speech because it was a rather large problem for them to learn how to read and write. On the other hand, no one remembers struggling laboriously to learn how to speak and understand spoken language. Most of us cannot remember the earliest parts of our lives when we were not yet able to talk; neither can we remember how it was that we learned to do this. We all remember practicing copying letters and struggling to master spelling. We are all aware of so-called primitive societies which

have no writing system, yet whose members communicate orally about anything they desire. In short, language is vocal, i.e., spoken, and is learned without conscious effort by merely being immersed in it; writing is an abstract and involves teaching. As a final note on this fundamental point, what would you be able to write without basing it on spoken language?

The word 'arbitary' appeared twice in our definition; '. . . arbitrary set of arbitrary vocal symbols.' By arbitary vocal symbols, we mean that there is no necessary connection between the words speakers of any given language use to represent things in the real world around them. If the connection between things and words was not arbitrary, there would only be one language on this planet. By arbitrary set we mean that different combinations of units can exist. i.e., different syllable patterns, different combinations of these to form meaning units, and different combinations of the latter to form grammatical patterns. These different combinations constitute distinctively different languages.

Linguists would agree that each individual language is perfectly suitable for its own cultural needs. The way in which an individual culture handles universal human problems will inevitably be reflected in its particular language. This observation, perhaps most fully developed by Benjamin Lee Whorf, that culture has a deep influence upon language, is frequently illustrated by the large variety of words which Eskimos have for 'snow'. Since their environment is literally based upon snow, up to 42 different words for snow in different conditions have been counted in a single Eskimo language, which has no general word for 'snow' at all.

If we attempt to define the word 'dialect' in a fasion similar to our above definition of 'language', we need only to substitute the former in

place of the latter. The difference lies in the size of the community involved; i.e., small communities which use dialects belong within and interact with a larger community which uses a language. Usually, though not always, the various dialects of a language are mutually intelligible. In China, for example, there are over 500 different dialects, speakers of many of which cannot understand speakers of many others. As would be expected, there are many different varieties, or dialects, of American English, all of which are 'more or less' mutually intelligible. One of the purposes of the present discussion is to suggest some practical ways of increasing the degree of mutual intelligibility between so-called 'Standard American English' and some of its most important, often misunderstood dialects.

Phonology is the specialized area within linguistic science which deals with the vocal symbols of language discussed above. Within this specialized area are three highly specialized branches:

1. Acoustic Phonetics
2. Auditory Phonetics
3. Articulatory Phonetics

Acoustic phonetics, a branch of physics, is providing many powerful tools for the analysis of the sounds which form the basis of language. Acoustic phoneticians observe sound waves, and at the present time, are making great strides in moving towards an understanding of how people are able to reproduce sounds which they hear.

Auditory phonetics, which is not of much special interest to linguists, deals with the mechanisms of the human ear. Speakers monitor their own speech, both by hearing it through the air and through the insides of their heads, and by feeling the positions and motions of their own articulatory organs. Hence, when we imitate sounds, we are coordinating what we hear with what we achieve with our tongue, lips, etc.

Articulatory phonetics concentrates upon the actual sounds usable in speech in terms of the mechanisms of their production by the human vocal apparatus.

'The New English' is the non-linguist's name for English grammar approached from the linguistic point of view. Unlike traditional grammar, which has been with us for at least three thousand years, structural linguistics and its approach to the systematicity of language has only recently developed. Perhaps the most striking difference between traditional and structural grammar rests in the difference between prescription and description. A prescriptive approach to grammar, as exemplified by traditional grammar, includes social evaluations, and specifies certain usages as 'good' while rejecting others as 'bad'. Prescriptive (i.e., traditional) grammars usually contain 'rules' which attempt to impel people to use the former and avoid the latter. Prescriptive grammar is unacceptable to most linguists because such grammar can be shown to be based upon inadequate, incomplete, or false descriptions of language which seriously distort it. Linguists prefer descriptive grammar, which records discernable structural patterns without evaluating them in terms of any non-linguistic factor.

A second difference between traditional and structural grammar has to do with the fundamental goals of these two approaches. Traditional grammar is concerned with what Noam Chomsky, the founder of Transformational-Generative Grammar, has referred to as surface structure, which is spoken and/or written language. Structural grammar, and particulally Transformational-Generative Grammar, which is an extension of early structural grammar, is also concerned with deep structure, which relates to thoughts, ideas, and concepts, and the relationship between deep and surface structure. Thus, unlike traditional grammar, which describes the surface of language, structural grammar, by looking at what lies underneath, in addition to describing language, attempts

to explain why it is the way it is. In other words, the latter attempts to explain a speaker's competence, or what he knows about his language (his intuitions) as well as to account for his performance while using it. Traditional grammar cannot be condemned for not explaining language; it does not attempt to do so. Moreover, prescriptive grammar has definite usefulness in teaching and in editing. The problem arises when prescriptive grammar which is based upon a lack of comprehension of language structure is used in an attempt to teach students a form of their language which is in conflict with the speech which they hear around them and which they use between themselves with perfect results in communicating.

It is beyond the scope of this presentation to attempt to evaluate the validity of coercing all students to accept and operate in 'Standard American English'. Many of us have serious doubts and reservations of the desirability of tampering with dialects because of the inevitable concomitant effects upon self-image, self-respect, personality, and identity. Instead, we will assume that it is desirable to have one universal dialect within English which is acceptable within all social situations. We will assume here that the target language is to be the variety of English which has been described variously as 'Front Door English', 'the kind of English which is habitually spoken by most of the educated people living within our society', 'the language of educated ease', etc.

If we want to have one acceptable standard language, presumably its study and mastery will accomplish all of the following goals:

1. speakers will be better able to understand one another
2. spelling will improve
3. students will find grammar both interesting and fun

4. speakers will not be condemned by society due to the manner in which they express themselves

5. speakers will be better able to evaluate and appreciate the present as they learn to understand the past

6. speakers will acquire an appreciation of the beauty and value of good literature

7. speakers will acquire greater intellectual breadth through greater verbal expressiveness

To illustrate some of these above points, such situations as a job interviewee being otherwise well-qualified but rejected for an opening because he says "I be here on account of what I done seed you ad", which both impedes the understanding of the interviewer and generates social disapproval, will be eliminated. Language being standard, and thus, more resistant to change, can be employed by presently living members of our society to explore the historical documents which have shaped this society, as well as the literary works which have given it aesthetic depth. Simultaneously, as they enjoy learning to understand how the structure of their language really works, they can improve their abilities to speak, write, and spell, thus enriching their ability to transmit and receive a greater variety and quality of ideas.

Obviously, these idealistic goals can only be approached through dedication, sensitivity, enthusiasm, and innovation on the part of the teacher. The importance of the latter will be discussed later. With regard to the other three qualities, suffice it to say that sensitive, sensible teaching, whatever the subject area, is successful only when based upon rewards and positive reinforcement of good responses, and never upon punishment for 'bad' ones.

Let us now focus in upon the role of phonology within the context of descriptive linguistic grammar ('the New English'). Dialect divergences exist on all levels of language. The intonation or 'melody' of a dialect is dependent upon factors of pitch, stress, rhythm or timing, and voice quality.

The phonemes, or distinctive sound units of one dialect are likely to vary from those of another, particularly with regard to the vowels. The graphemes, or written letters, (hence the spelling system) are inextricably linked to the spoken language since there is an inevitable association between sounds and letters. Morphemes, or minimal meaning units, lexical items, or vocabulary words and syntax, or sentence patterns, likewise will vary between dialects as will extra-linguistic factors such as facial expressions and gestures. The following differences exist between 'Standard English' and some regional dialects:

'Standard English'	Dialect
po'lice	pó'lice
roast bé'ef	ró'ast beef
campa'ign	cám'paign
hote'l	hó'tel

In the above words, stress in 'Standard English' is on the second of the two syllables, whereas in the dialect version, it is on the first. Actually, the dialect version would seem <u>more</u> logical, since most two-syllable words in English ARE stressed on the first syllable; finger, genius, signpost, congress, leisure, passion, ocean, letter, etc.

'Standard English'	Dialect
upon	'pon
remember	'member
about	'bout
except	'cept

In these words, stress appears on the second syllable in the 'standard' dialect. In the other one, the unstressed first syllable has been dropped. At times, dialect speakers, aware that they have dropped a syllable, will attempt to put it back at the beginning of a word, knowing that it is 'supposed to' have one, but not always knowing what the missing syllable is. This leads to hypercorrect forms such as:

'Standard'	Dialect	Hypercorrect Dialect
divorce	'vorce	revorce
memorial	'morial	remorial
diploma	'ploma	reploma
remember	'member	remember

The last hypercorrect item happens to coincide with the 'standard' form because the re-prefix, which is the one used in the dialect, happens to match the first syllable in the 'standard' form.

The following phonological differences have been observed:

'Standard'	Dialect	
[-sk#]	[-ks#]	(speakers who do this are using the old Anglo-Saxon form) (but probably don't know it)
ask	ax	
[-ks#]	[-k]	
box	bok	
six	sick	
tax	tack	more frequent in South than North
[#str]-	[#sk]-	
string	skring	
street	skreet	
strap	skrap	
steel	skeel	
[-st#]	[-sk#]	
wrist	wrisk	
twist	twisk	
waist	waisk	
last	lask	
[-sk#]	[-st#]	
desk	dest	
mask	mast	
task	tast	
disc	dist	
[-sks#]	[-saz#] or [-skaz#]	
masks	masses	maskes
desks	desses	deskes
tasks	tasses	taskes
discs	disses	diskes
[-ted#] Past Tense Marker	[-d#]	
started	stard or sta	
wanted	wanda	
used to	useta	

iced tea	ice tea (common in speech and writing everywhere)
[#d-]	[#d-]
they	dey
this	dis
that	dat
the light	delight*

*(This last example occurred locally at East Carolina University's Developmental Evaluation Clinic. A child was being shown pictures of children expressing various emotions. When shown a picture of a child opening a wrapped present with a gigantic smile on his face, together with several other pictures of children with various facial expressions, and instructed, "Show me delight," the child pointed to the ceiling of the room. He was not observed to overtly manifest any of the usual symptoms of the chronic punster.)

'Standard'	Dialect
[#θ-]	[#t-]
thought	taut
thin	tin
thanks	tanks
thick	tick
[#θr-]	[#fr-]
three	free
throat	froat
thread	fred
thrush	frush
[-θ-]	[-f-]
nothing	nuf'n
author	ahfuh
ether	eefuh
bathroom	bafroom
[-d-]	[-v-]
brother	bruvah
rather	ravah
bathing	bavin
weather	wevah
[#r-]	[#r-]
run	run
rub	rub
red	red
rat	rat

[#l-]	[#l-]
lip	lip
lamp	lamp
loud	loud
long	long
[-r#]	[-ø#]
sister	sistah
brother	bruvah
door	doe
four	foe
bear	beauh
sure	sho'
sore	so*

*Teacher: Use the word 'so' in a sentence. I don't mean to sew a dress.

Student: I got a so on my laig.

Carol	ca'ol
story	stoey
marry	ma'y
'Standard'	Dialect
[-ø-]	[-r-]
taught	torte
[-l#]	[-ø#]
nickel	nickah
I'll go	I go here, missing sound affects syntax)
he'll be	he be
we'll have	we have
[#θr-]	[#θ-]
throw	th'ow
through	th'uw
throat	th'ot
thread	th'ed
[#pr-]	[p-]
protect	p'otek
professor	p'ofessah
[-d#]	[-t#]
mud	mut
good	goot
load	loat
played	playt

[d]	[Ø]
good	goo'
kids	kiz
boards	boaz
[-n#]	[-n#]
singing	singin'
coming	comin'
doing	doin'
[ai] I	[ah] ah
side	sahd
knife	nahf
alive	alahv
[ɔi]	[oa]
boy	boah (same as 'boar')
toy	toah (same as 'tore')
moist	moas (same as "morse')
oil	oah (same as 'or')
`an´	` a´ or Ø
He had an apple	He had a apple.
	He had apple.

I should at this point like to mention several of the most frequently occurrent differences, at the syntactic level between 'Standard English' and many dialects of Black English the motivation for which is that shortly we will be discussing and presenting sample drills for shaping verbal behavior. Any oral drill is obviously going to involve patterns of pronunciation, and individual dialectical sound differences will invariably have an effect upon morphology and syntax. The following syntactic differences have been observed:

'Standard Eng.'		'Black Eng.'
He did it.	Simple Past	He done it.
He has walked.	Completive	He done walked.
He walked a long time ago.	Remote Time	He been walked a long time ago.
They want to go.	Hypercorrect	They want to goes.
He is going to go.	Future	He gonna go.
		He gon go.
I am going to go.	Future	Imana go.
		Imon go.
		Ima go.
I am good.	Momentary	I be good.
I am good.	Always	I good.

(note that 'Standard English' cannot distinguish between the latter two. Thus, in this respect, the dialect is richer in concept expression than the 'standard' language.)

I have never seen a ghost anywhere	Negation	I ain't (not never seed no ghost nowhere(s).
Five books	Plural	Five book. (Redundant Plural suffix omitted after numbers.)
I want to know where he went.	Indirect Question	I want to know where did he go.
Is he coming with us	Auxiliary Deletion	He comin' with us?
My brother is bigger	Pronominal Apposition	My brother, he bigger.
There is a book missing.	Existential It	It is a book missing.

A television advertisement for soup mix showed the soup in the process of being prepared. A speaker of 'Standard English' asked, "Is it soup yet?", meaning, "Has it been converted from the powdered mix into the table-ready finished product?" Speakers of some dialects of Black English would get quite a different semantic reading, namely, "Is there any soup yet?" In this particular instance, the context would admit either interpretation and would not lead to the misunderstanding, which frequently occurs when intercommunication between these two groups is attempted.

Since World War II, at which time the American military was faced with the acute problem of attempting to interrogate German and Japanese prisoners of war in their own languages by employing the inefficient Grammar-Translation method such as was used in school Latin courses, there has been great progress in overhauling the methodology employed in language learning. Linguists working together in an attempt to formulate a strategy for rapid acquisition by adults

of non-native speech habits and patterns turned to the examination of child language acquisition. It was observed that since children acquire the language surrounding them by simple immersion and without teaching, the immersion technique should also be effective for adults. Of course, adults already have a complete language system deeply ingrained, and when another system is presented them, they filter the new language through their own, each difference between the old and the new providing interference.

A systematic point by point comparision of the native and target languages on phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels was carefully worked out by linguistic theorists. This technique, known as contrastive analysis, has been successfully employed in the teaching of non-native languages to non-infants for the last thirty years. It is the basis for the modern language laboratory, and is often referred to by names such as the aural-oral approach, the audio-lingual method, the linguistic method, and pattern practice. In the lab, each student has the opportunity to hear a model on tape, usually a native speaker, repeat what he hears, then play back the tape to compare his imitation with the performance of the model. He can repeat the tape as often as he desires, erasing his track on the tape at will. Previous to the employment of pattern practice repetition, language learning was largely dependent upon unstructured, unsystematic correction of individual items, forms, and usages which deviated from the standard. The systematicity of each language was overlooked, as was the correlation of systems between languages. Generalities which would have allowed rapid efficient, painless mastery of large chunks of language were overlooked. Contrastive analysis has made the subject matter of the target language more palatable and its internalization more effective by systematically comparing individual differences point by point, and by comparing language systems and subsystems on this same basis.

Since Applied Linguistics has been more successful than any other method of rapidly and efficiently teaching speakers of one language to master another language, it would seem plausible that its strategies could be used (or adapted) to work, instead of with two different languages, with two different dialects of the same language. This has been done with positive results in various parts of the United States since the early sixties. At this point, I should like to present some examples of exactly how these linguistic techniques can be used in the classroom in order to get speakers of one dialect to be able to use another dialect of the same language with fluency and precision, through oral drills.

I emphatically believe that the single most important success factor in all classroom work is based upon the innovation employed by the teacher. A teacher does not need to be a specialist in linguistics, although certainly someone who is sophisticated in this area has command of a very powerful tool. Whatever degree of fundamental linguistic theory is employed, classroom contact is far more important than the theoretical expertise of the teacher.

Within the context of the specific classroom full of individual students both the teacher and the students have well-defined roles with respect to the innovative process. The creative teacher developing materials will be guided by the following three criteria:

1. Materials must be easy to use
2. Materials must go over well with students
3. Materials must be effective

If all three of these are not coordinated, nothing of much importance can transpire. When attending meetings and conferences, the great majority of teachers are more interested in specific things that they can do in their own classroom than they are in general concepts and attitudes, as shown by the large number of requests for materials and the techniques for presenting

them. A great deal of time can be wasted at professional meetings by reaffirming over and over that teachers should appreciate and understand their students. This is definitely true, and no one would disagree, so time could be much better spent in providing an inventory of specific materials and techniques that can actually be drawn from during the teaching process.

Good teachers are always evaluating what they are doing. They will examine the techniques and materials they are using and/or developing, and will make decisions accordingly. Here are some suggestions about evaluating materials after they have been developed and tried out with a specific class:

1. Does it work? If not, throw it away, or modify it, and try it again. If it does, keep it, but remember, anything gets dull to both teacher and students after a while.
2. Is it worth what it costs with regard to the time and effort involved in its preparations and presentation? Again, if answer is affirmative, keep it, and make it better. If negative, dump it or modify it and try it again.
3. Has it held student interest? If not, forget it. If so, what are you going to do next time to make it come alive to both you and them?
4. How effective is it relative to other alternatives. There may well be several other possibilities that you haven't thought of or tried yet.

A word of warning is in order here. Just because someone is (or claims to be) an expert theoretical linguist does not mean that his recommendations are always to be taken absolutely literally. Unfortunately, some theorists are apparently working in a vacuum, apparently to entertain themselves and their colleagues, without any real regard for the practical applications of their theories. They have lost sight of the fact that it is practical need which motivates the postulation of a theory in the first place. If what theorists say sounds as though it could be practical and worth applying in the classroom situation, but does not work in practice, this is not necessarily the fault of either the teacher or the students.

One technique which is definitely guaranteed to prevent learning from taking place is the so-called 'Medicine Approach'; 'it may taste bad, but it's good for you', or, as applied to classroom oral drills, 'I know that this is boring, but please put up with it for a few minutes.' Failure is inevitable when prior lack of success is admitted and the feeling of even possible failure is instilled. Therefore, while exuding real enthusiasm (any student can instantly tell when it is faked) closely watch students to see what is happening to them. Are they involved in the activity and are they willing to continue it? If not, this response should be welcomed as a challenge to the teacher to be more creative.

The approach which has been maximally successful in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL, also known as EFL (English as a Foreign Language), TOEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language), etc.) has been the cycle of imitation, repetition, and manipulation. The first two of these were mentioned above as being employed in the language learning laboratory. A model of 'correctness' is presented either live (by the teacher) or on tape, and the student repeats it until it becomes both automatic and easy. Manipulation of patterns is used to relate one pattern to another. A concomitant bonus of manipulation of patterns is that it can be employed to introduce new vocabulary items, but its primary function is to get the learner to make patterns become habits. The first two parts of the cycle, imitation and repetition, are especially necessary when sound production is difficult, either in terms of individual sounds or in sequences and clusters which do not exist or are partially different in the native and target languages. The value of repetition is that this type of practice is the only way in which to gain neuro-muscular control and to acquire and reinforce the habit of using new patterns at the appropriate moment.

In a very real sense, oral imitation and repetition take a person back to the stage at which he was a mere babbling infant. By so doing, and giving him patterns to imitate, the opportunity is provided for him to sharpen his ear-voice reflexes. When learning a non-native language, a speaker must be reeducated to produce sounds with precision. In order for him to use these effectively, in the entire language context, he must have the opportunity for repetition of sounds in combinations which the target language requires.

Perhaps the greatest problem involved with the imitation-repetition part of the learning cycle is that non-infants do not like to imitate and repeat. This means that from seventh graders through adults (including teachers) learners will feel greatly inhibited when called upon to do tasks involving sound mimicry. They will feel that they are being made to appear ridiculous, that they may fail, but that even if they do not, what they are being asked to do is not in the least bit interesting and they cannot feel any sense of progress while they are doing it. Because of these factors, the usefulness of imitation and repetition is limited, and must be supplemented with other varieties of activities.

Let us now examine some of the specific types of drills deviced by applied linguists for developing automatic habits in oral proficiency in sound production. Some sample syntactic drills will also be presented here in addition to phonological drills in response to the constant request for practical materials. We will use, as examples, some of the differences between 'Standard English' and 'Dialect' mentioned earlier in this presentation. Drills will be presented in chronological order of difficulty.

One way to compensate for the inherent problems of lack of interest and effectiveness in imitation and repetition is to employ Contrast and Minimal Pair Drills. Since a speaker cannot be expected to produce sounds which he

is incapable of hearing, he must be taught to discriminate between sounds which he uses in his own dialect and their counterparts in the one which he is learning. In Drill 1, the teacher is the model, and presents pairs of words. Some of the words are in 'Standard English' and others are pronounced as they exist in the dialect, but they always occur in pairs. The student is asked to respond either 'Some' when he hears a word said twice in 'Standard English' OR in the dialect, and to respond 'Different' when either of the words is in dialect and the other is the 'standard' from:

Drill 1. Morphophonological; Contrasts involving Noun Plurals

Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1. masks/masses	1. Different
2. masks/masks	2. Same
3. masses/masses	3. Same
4. tasses/tasses	4. Same
5. tasses/tasks	5. Different

This drill is easy to present, takes little time, and is suitable for handling a single pronunciation feature at a time. Again, as mentioned, the learner must hear a sound difference before he is prepared to imitate it. At this stage, the forms are NOT identified as to which sounds are the targets and which ones the learner presently uses in his own dialect.

Drill 2 is also a contrast drill, but uses the focused item within the context of a short but complete sentence.

Drill 2. Morphophonological; Contrasts in Syntactic Contexts

	Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1.	He work hard./He works hard.	1. Different.
2.	He work hard./He work hard.	2. Same
3.	Leroy likes motorcycles./ Leroy like motorcycles.	3. Same
4.	Ollie play guard./ Ollie play guard.	4. Same
5.	She wants a drink./ She want a drink.	5. Different

This drill, like Drill 1, requires little time to verify that all students are aware of the point in question. The teacher can pinpoint any students who are making incorrect responses and give them additional practice, either on the spot, or at a later time individually or as a smaller group. Drill 2 is more challenging than Drill 1, as students have to listen closely for the one (if any) sound which is different. As in All oral drills, pace is extremely important. As soon as drill ceases to be lively, students lose interest. They will eventually anyway, and when signs of flagging appear, it is time for something else. Also, as soon as all members of the group have mastered the drill, it is pointless to prolong it.

At the present time, psycholinguists, who are people trained in both psychology and linguistics, have significant experimental evidence that linguistic interference is greater between two closely-related dialects such as 'Standard' and 'non-standard' English, than between two completely different languages. When two dialects of the same languages are contrasted, often the socially significant differences are obscured by the similarities, and thus there appears to be no real challenge in learning the nonnative dialect. If student-hearers are unable to discriminate between a form in their dialect and its counterpart in the other, it is most likely due to this interference. 'Standard' and 'non-standard' forms can best be sorted our precisely by this type of contrast drill, which was originally specifically designed to overcome interference.

A special problem inherent in the contrastive analysis of two dialects of the same language which is absent in that of two different languages is the concept of appropriateness, which is, as mentioned earlier, strictly socially determined. Students who are already using one variety of English and simultaneously attempting to acquire another need to be aware of the

social suitability factor, as this is ultimately what controls social acceptability in language, and thus is what ultimately controls which dialect is appropriate for which social situation. In fact, if such students are too young to understand the concept of appropriateness, attempts at teaching them 'Standard English' and when to use it will be difficult, if not totally fruitless. Such students can perform Drill 1 and Drill 2, but will not be aware of why it is that they are being required to discriminate between two different dialects.

Drill 3 and Drill 4, below, like Drills 1 and 2, above, are based upon contrast, and the assumption that people cannot produce contrasts, except accidentally, until they can recognize them through their own hearing. Unlike the first two drills, the next two have the concept of appropriateness built in. In Drills 3 and 4, students are given a single rather than a paired item and asked to identify the context in which the item would be appropriate, i.e., socially acceptable. Instead of the terms 'standard' and 'non-standard' (which latter is inherently negative, and, unfortunately, in widespread use), shorter, less technical and more relevant names for the two dialects can be used. One such possibility involves the substitution of the word 'class' for 'standard' and the word 'street' for 'non-standard'. It is entirely possible that the substitute words might have unfavorable local connotations, in which case neutral labels would need to be sought out. For example, 'school' and 'home' could be used instead of 'class' and 'street'.

Drill 3. Morphonological; Noun Plurals, With Dialect Appropriateness

Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1. masks	1. School
2. desses	2. Home
3. desks	3. School
4. deskes	4. Home
5. tasks	5. School

Here, a single item is presented at a time, rather than one paired with another, as in the two preceding drills. Two things must be kept in mind when selecting items for the drill; 1) words used must be familiar and common enough to warrant their use in the drill; and 2) if 'non-standard' forms do not exist within the group using the drill, they should not be introduced, as this would create unnecessary additional confusion. For example, in a particular class students may have Item 2 in Drill 3, above, in their 'home' dialect, but not Item 4. If such is the case, Item 4 should not appear in the drill, unless there is evidence that it is involved in some sort of interference problem.

Drill 4 parallels Drill 3, the difference being that, as in Drill 2, in Drill 4 an individual word is given a sentence context instead of being presented in isolation:

Drill 4. Morphonological; Contrast in Syntactic Contexts, With Dialect Appropriateness

Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1. Leroy likes motorcycles.	1. School
2. He work hard.	2. Home
3. She want a drink.	3. Home
4. She wants a drink.	4. School
5. Ollie plays guard.	5. School

Before presenting some additional possibilities of various drill types, I should like to reemphasize that in ALL drills the circumstances must be tightly controlled to focus upon the features that are being drilled and to completely eliminate other interferences. Thus, in some instances, students may be making responses which are correct with regard to the feature(s) being drilled but deviant in other ways. This is not a problem in identification drills, such as Drills 1 - 4 above, in which the model is provided to the students and they are merely asked to identify it, but does occur in production

drills, in which they are providing the items. A student response of "He wants three book", when the focus of the drill is upon systematic Subject-Verb Agreement, and when noun plurals have not yet been introduced would be considered correct within the context of the drill. One of the greatest difficulties of the non-structured approach to teaching 'correct' usage is that it attempts to do everything at the same time rather than concentrating on a single feature and building cumulatively.

In order to get a maximum amount of student interest and involvement, at times students can be employed to lead the drills. It has been shown that people frequently learn things faster and better from their peers than from others. Students leading drills should have complete mastery of the concepts they are presenting, and should have a complete text of the drills, including the desired answers. Whenever mistakes occur, leaders should repeat items until these mistakes are eliminated. This technique of employing students as drill leaders has proven surprisingly successful.

The remaining drills which I would like to present here are not phonological, but rather, syntactical. My reason for including them in this presentation is that I feel that teachers contemplating the use of oral drills should be exposed to the complete range these can encompass before starting to use them. The following drills will provide an overall idea of the type of systematic structuring, building, and sequencing that takes place during the entire drill cycle. Whereas the above four drills involved the passive skill of identification, the following are based upon the full active cycle of imitation, repetition, and manipulation.

Drill 5. Syntactic; Single-Slot Substitution

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	We are going to the concert.	1.	We are going to the concert.
2.	They	2.	They are going to the concert.
3.	You and I	3.	You and I are going to the concert.
4.	Several members of our class	4.	Several members of our class are going to the concert.
5.	Frank and Sam	5.	Frank and Sam are going to the concert.

This particular example of single-slot substitution (here, subject position) could be used for drill in the concept of Subject-Verb Agreement involving standard usage of the verb 'be'.

Drill 6. Syntactic; Tense Change plus S-V Agreement

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	Harry waited every day.	1.	Harry waits every day.
2.	We practiced every afternoon.	2.	We practice every afternoon.
3.	She always sang off key.	3.	She always sings off key.
4.	George wanted a new bike.	4.	George wants a new bike.
5.	Frank liked homework.	5.	Frank likes homework.

The aim of Drill 6 is to get speakers to become aware of the Third Person Singular Present Tense Marker (-s) and when it is used. Using the names of students actually in the group, and, whenever possible and appropriate, having the examples in the drills relate personally to them, can provide additional interest to the drills. Naturally, it would be inappropriate to include any reference to a negative personal quality which might cause embarassment.

Drill 7. Syntactic; Verb Substitution

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	Bill likes English classes.	1.	Bill likes English classes.
2.	enjoys	2.	Bill enjoys English classes.
3.	prefers	3.	Bill prefers English classes.
4.	hates	4.	Bill hates English classes.
5.	skips	5.	Bill skips English classes.

It should be noted that Drill 7 is actually easier to perform than Drill 6, since in Drill 6 one change in the pattern requires a cooccurrent change (Verb suffix must match Number of Subject), whereas in Drill 7, one verb is merely substituted for another. A Drill in Type 7 could be employed to introduce new vocabulary items, but its primary function is to practice using verbs with the appropriate tense-person markers. The drill can be made more challenging by having the teacher present the non-inflected form of the verb as the stimulus, in which case, the respondents have to supply the appropriate marker.

As was mentioned earlier, the pace of a drill is vitally important to its success. It is also desirable to alter the amount of difficulty in a sequence of drills, so that once in a while, students are given a 'rest' by occasionally performing a drill which requires lesser concentration that the one they have just completed. This can involve previously-drilled points, which are then periodically reintroduced to provide reinforcement, and to insure that what was learned earlier is not subsequently forgotten through lack of usage.

Drill 8. Syntactic; Multiple-Slot Substitution

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	Bill likes English classes.	1.	Bill likes English classes.
2.	George	2.	George likes English classes.
3.	hates	3.	George hates English classes.
4.	girls	4.	George hates girls.
5.	football	5.	George hates football.

This is a challenging drill, in which students have to decide where to substitute the new item. It must be carefully controlled, or will break down. For example, the above example is open to multiple interpretations; Stimulus Sentence 2 could also elicit a response 'Bill likes George', which would be acceptable and correct, if everyone in the group responded to the same.

Otherwise, half of the class might answer one way and half the other, in which case the drill would fall apart, and could not continue without a fresh start. If this were to happen inadvertently, (or perhaps, once in a while, intentionally, on the part of the teacher,) it could provide for a brief relaxation of tension and change of pace. A multiple-slot substitution drill is complex, and requires a gret deal of attention in order to be successful. It can be used when students are becoming bored with performing simple tasks and/or when their attention is waning.

Drill 9. Syntactic; Single-Slot Substitution Plus Coocurrence

Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1. Bill likes English classes.	1. Bill likes English classes.
2. George	2. George likes English classes.
3. They	3. They like English classes.
4. She	4. She likes English classes.
5. George and Bill	5. George and Bill like English classes.

In Drill 9, the students do not have to decide where in the sentence to substitute in the new items, but they do have to decide what effect the new item will have on the rest of the sentence. In this case, the verb is affected by the substitution of singular or plural subjects. Drill 9 is actually a combination of Drill 5 and part of Drill 6.

Drill 10. Syntactic; Multiple-Slot Substitution Plus Coocurrence

Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1. Bill likes English classes.	1. Bill likes English classes.
2. hate(s)	2. Bill hates English classes.
3. French	3. Bill hates French.
4. Bill and Joe	4. Bill and Joe hate French.
5. He	5. He hates French.

Drill 10 is a combination of Drill 8 and part of Drill 6. In Drill 10, students have to decide where to put the new item, as well as what effect the item will have on the rest of the sentence. Note that Teacher Stimulus 3.

'French' cannot be substituted in subject position, the verb 'hate' requiring an animate subject. Thus, we do not get French hates English classes. Likewise, by starting with Sentence 3, Bill hates French, and substituting Bill and Joe, we are more likely to get Bill and Joe hate French, which we want, than Bill hates Bill and Joe, which latter is only permissible in English when the two Bill referents are different. The Drill can be made tighter than the example, which was intentionally made open to ambiguity for illustrative purposes.

Drill 11. Syntactic; Yes/No Question Transformation from Kernel

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	Bill likes English class.	1.	Does Bill like English class?
2.	The team practices after school.	2.	Does the team practice after school?
3.	Bob works on weekends.	3.	Does Bob work on weekends?
4.	Zelda studies after dinner.	4.	Does Zelda study after dinner?
5.	Irene likes Zeke.	5.	Does Irene like Zeke?

In Drill 11, students transform, or change, a kernel (i.e., basic) sentence into the Yes/No Question form. Other simple possibilities here include Negative Sentences. Passive Sentences, and combinations of Negative Passive, and Question forms. Drill 11 is unlike the first 10 drills in that it changes an entire kernel sentence structural pattern into another related pattern.

Drill 12. Syntactic; Yes/No Question Question Plus Aux. Agreement

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	Bill likes English class.	1.	Does Bill like English class?
2.	They practice after school.	2.	Do they practice after school?
3.	They practiced after school.	3.	Did they practice after school?
4.	I practiced after school	4.	Did I practice after school?
5.	He practices in the morning.	5.	Does he practice in the morning?

Drill 12 is based upon Drill 11, but additionally involves selection of the form of the auxiliary verb to match the number and person of the subject. A further

complexity can be added to the drill by including sentences with the verb 'be', the auxiliary verb 'have' and the modal auxiliaries:

6.	Today is Friday.	6.	Is today Friday?
7.	Joe could lift 500 pounds.	7.	Could Joe lift 500 pounds?
8.	Sam hated girls.	8.	Did Sam hate girls?
9.	They have already left.	9.	Have they already left?
10.	I am tired of this drill	10.	Am I tired of this drill?

Drill 13. Syntactic; Multiple-Slot Substitution Plus Transformations

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	Bill likes English class.	1.	Bill likes English class.
2.	hate(s)	2.	Bill hates English class.
3.	NEGATIVE	3.	Bill does not hate English class.
4.	CONTRACTION	4.	Bill doesn't hate English class.
5.	gym	5.	Bill doesn' have gym.
6.	QUESTION	6.	Doesn't Bill hate gym?
7.	AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT	7.	Bill hates gym.
8.	everybody/SUBJECT	8.	Everybody hates gym.
9.	everything	9.	Everybody hates everything.
10.	NEGATIVE+CONTRACTION	10.	Everybody doesn't hate everything.

Drill 13 is a very sophisticated combination of substitution drills (Drills 5-10 above) and transformation drills (Drills 11 and 12 above). It is difficult to initiate because of the large number of variables involved, but once students catch on, it combines practice in all of the individual skills they have been learning and accumulating. It is subject to breakdown. (For example, being an oral drill, Teacher Stimulus #5 may be interpreted as Jim, in which case, Sent 5 will be Jim doesn't hate English class. Again, this was done in the above illustration to point out the necessity of careful preparation and control of the drill content. Also, the pace will of necessity be slower as more thinking and less automatic response is called for.

Drills may be varied in their manner of presentation. In addition to having students lead the drills, the group being drilled may be subdivided

into teams which respond alternately, with scores for correct answers tallied. These thirteen drills are just a few examples of the wide variety of possibilities. An innovative materials creator can combine, amplify, and supplement these with an interesting variety of possibilities which will captivate the student audience while at the same time providing meaningful practice on particular features which are being presented.

There is an eventual limitation upon the utility of all of the above drills. As useful as they are at establishing new habit patterns, they ignore the fundamental feature of human language which makes it unique; the ability of all speakers to create novel utterences, and not merely mechanically put together ones to which they have been previously exposed. A happy medium is needed between imitation drills, which are ultimately too restrictive, and free conversation, which has no control factor built in, to employ during the teaching and learning of new forms. To provide flexibility and control, a drill known as the Question-and-Answer type can be employed. Here, the teacher asks a specific question, or names a specific topic, and the students respond with either a predetermined sentence or sentence pattern or with any appropriate novel response. (or the two combined). The following is only one representative example of stimulating the generation of novel sentences.

Drill 14. Topic-Controlled Stimulus; Preset Response Plus Free Response

	Teacher Stimulus:		Student Response:
1.	ape	1.	I see an ape and . . . . . (he looks like you, he wants peanuts, etc.)
2.	book	2.	I see a book and . . . . . (I'd like to read it, it's too expensive, etc.)
3.	bicycle	3.	I see a bicycle and . . . . . (mine is better, I'm going to rip it off, etc.)

4. accident	4. I see an accident and . . . . . (I'm going to call the ambulance, it's your fault, etc.
5. drill	5. I see a drill and . . . . . (I refuse to participate, I'm going to bore you with it, etc.)

Students can fill in the last part of the sentence with anything appropriate, and are encouraged to innovate, not merely repeating what other have already said. Sometimes this drill will be a bit slow getting off the ground, in which case, as always, the teacher can provide an extended example of the desired type of model response.

Another drill type which evokes innovative responses, and that has proven effective on various levels, involves matching items in two different columns and then talking about their combination.

Drill 15. Topic Creation via Matching

Stimulus List:	girls	pretty
	boys	interesting
	books	fun
	guitars	exciting
	bicycles	fast
Student Responses:	Girls are fun, Girls are pretty, Girls are pretty exciting, Bicycles are fun, Boys are interesting, Bicycles are fast, Guitars are interesting and fun, Fast girls are pretty interesting exciting fun, etc.	

Responses might be in the negative as well as the affirmative. Students should be encouraged to participate with a good attitude, and thus will not produce offensive sentences. One possible extension of the drill involves having one student pick a word from each list and create a novel sentence with the two items. A second student then either agrees or disagrees with the first one, and adds something novel to his sentence. For example: Student 1.: Girls

are interesting. Student 2.: Yes, they are, and they are fun, too. A drill such as Drill 15 can provide necessary oral patterned responses while at the time stimulating student interest and creativity.

Another team activity, in addition to the one mentioned in conjunction with Drill 13 above, could be set up like a game.

Drill 16. '20 Questions'; Incorporating Dialect Appropriateness

Description of Drill: Several teams are set up. The game is then played in the standard way, with the following additional condition. All questions which are asked count, but only those which are phrased completely correctly in the target dialect are answered. This restriction requires that the teacher be the one to answer the questions, but students can become involved in keeping count and score and in relaying the questions from the teams to the teacher. In some cases, it may be possible for a student with fluent mastery of the target dialect and total recognition of differences between this dialect and the one being altered to replace the teacher. One great advantage of this type of situation is that students do not feel as though they are being subjected to the monotony of drills.

It will be recalled that Drills 3, 4 and 16, presented above, are morphophonological drills involving the concept of dialect appropriateness (home/school). This concept can also be incorporated into advanced syntactic drills such as the following:

Drill 17. Yes/No Questions and Answers, with Dialect Appropriateness

Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1. Leroy, he get good grades.	1. No, he don't.
2. George has a red shirt on.	2. Yes, he does.
3. This ain't not no easy drill.	3. No, it ain't.
4. Sam's brother is in this class.	4. Yes, he is.
5. This is Drill 17.	5. Yes, it is.

Students, in addition to responding in the same dialect as the question, could identify the social context in which the verbal interaction is appropriate, i.e., they could mention that Items 1 and 3 are appropriate for home, but not class. Notice that the appropriate answer to the question is in the same dialect as the question. A possible variation of Drill 17 would be to only respond to questions that were posed in the 'standard' dialect, (or possibly, in the other one). Another possibility involves rephrasing the question in the other dialect and then (optionally) answering it.

Drill 18. Questions, Free Answers Plus Dialect Appropriateness

Teacher Stimulus:	Student Response:
1. Do Deborah have three brother?	1. 'No' PLUS any appropriate free response in same dialect.
2. What are you going to do after school today?	2. Any appropriate response in 'standard' English.
3. What you got in you pocket?	3. Free response in same dialect.

The teacher can control the range of student responses by limiting the types and topics of the questions so that students get the necessary practice without noticing the restrictions placed upon them.

Now that eighteen possible drill types have been outlined, one potential danger involved with their use needs to be mentioned. It is possible to get so involved in preparing drills that they become an end in themselves instead of an aid towards achieving a goal. The goal is not to get people to be able to do drills flawlessly, but to get them to communicate naturally. Thus, the

drills must be used sensibly and with sensitivity. They can gradually be withdrawn and replaced with a meaningful activity which is more closely related to real life situations. Role-playing activities fulfill this type of need. For examples, students can prepare skits duplicating real job interviews, literature classes, business letter dictations, etc. In cases where 'standard' English is appropriate, students not speaking this dialect natively can practice with the aid of written texts, tape recorders, or live human models. Such skits can be presented in competition, with prizes awarded for the best ones. One very great advantage involved in this type of activity is that acting helps to promote self-confidence and self-esteem. Such self-involvement also increases awareness of the desirability for versatility in the target dialect, providing greater ease in communication, which is, after all, the only valid reason for doing what we have been discussing here.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat what I said earlier with regard to the equal validity of all dialects. No dialect is either 'standard', 'all good', 'correct', and 'right', nor is it 'sub-standard', 'no good', 'incorrect', and 'wrong'. Rather, all dialects are appropriate within their own well-defined social settings. Just as community attitudes can be improved by the mutual acknowledgement of cultural and linguistic differences all being of equal validity, teachers can be more effective in improving classroom English instruction by first becoming more sensitive to what is going on linguistically around them and secondly by eliminating biases which they uncover in their own attitudes towards 'nonstandardness'.

When both teachers and students sincerely seek to communicate with each other through mutual respect for each others' dialects, they will enrich both

others and themselves by expanding their ability to control the language. Through better intercommunication, such expanded awareness can only contribute towards a better and more humane educational experience for everyone.

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ACCOMMODATING DEFICIENCIES IN READING AND WRITING

by

Mrs. Bertie Fearing

If, five years ago, I had been asked to speak at this conference on my pedagogic philosophy, I would have stood before you arrogant, self-assured, and cocky. After all, I was then freshly armed with my M.A. in English, plus two years of college teaching experience as a graduate assistant. Oh, I knew all about teaching all right, and I would have gladly told you how I walked into class (preferably two to five minutes late), how I delivered my profound lectures (a prize collection of years of classroom notes), how I issued challenging, practically impossible assignments, and how I slashed my students' efforts to shreds -- all in the name of "High standards." I would have been truly impressed with myself, and that is probably why I was not asked to speak to you five years ago.

Today, I do not come to speak to you at all, but rather to share with you some ideas about how we at Pitt Technical Institute make an earnest attempt to help our students improve their written communication skills.

Background

Let's begin with a typical freshman English class of twenty students at Pitt Tech. Each of the students is enrolled in one of the sixteen two-year Associate in Applied Science degree programs offered in accounting, agricultural and environmental sciences, architectural drafting, business administration, commercial art and graphic design, electronic data-processing, electronics, mental health, nursing, office careers, and police science. Of these twenty students, the majority are from rural Pitt and surrounding counties; only five or six are from towns the size of Greenville (35,000). All have

high school diplomas or have passed the high school equivalency test; our students are, in other words, your former students. Most range in age from eighteen to twenty-five. A few are older. Thirty-five percent are veterans. Of the twenty, eight are black -- our ratio running about forty to sixty percent. And if you could meet them, you would quickly perceive that they are normal, healthy American students, with a dedicated apathy toward developing their writing skills.

However homogenous they are in their attitude toward composition, they reveal "wide differences in linguistic sophistication," to use Professor J. N. Hook's expression. Not unlike Professor Hook's hypothetical class in THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH, there are seven to nine for whom "if I was you" represents a normal mode of expression, half a dozen who say "he done it," and seventeen who are often unsure about "he" and "him," not to mention "who" and "whom." Five in the class are able to classify most words grammatically, but such powers of discrimination are totally lacking in the remaining sixteen. In fact, once during an exam, I overheard one student discreetly inquiring of another, "Is you a pronoun?" The answer, "No. I is not!"

Continuing with our class of twenty, a couple truly enjoy writing and have a fairly accurate notion of the writer's obligation to his reader. The same two can vary sentence structure and can organize essays in a variety of ways. Ten of the others can organize chronologically, but are confused when a topic requires any other order. Alas, the remaining eight simply blurt out whatever comes to their minds or pens, regardless of logical order. Of these eight, half are incapable of writing a complete sentence, let alone of assembling sentences into a coherent paragraph.[1] And our objective as English teachers is so simple to state, so difficult to achieve: to enable each

student to achieve competency in the communication skills required by the technical field for which he is training. And this is how we do it:

Placement Testing

Upon entrance to Pitt Tech, each student takes a placement test to determine his level of reading proficiency. If he scores below the 6.0 grade reading level, he is enrolled in a reading improvement course. If he scores on or above the 6.0 grade reading level, he enrolls in our regular series of technical English, which consists of five courses. Although only a few curricula require the full five course sequence, all require the first two courses which focus on building basic communication skills and on which I will focus today. Descriptions of these first two courses are as follows:

1. English 101, Grammar -- Designed as a pre-composition course to aid the technical student in improved grammatical techniques. The approach is functional, with emphasis on sentence structure.

2. English 102, Composition -- Designed to aid the technical student in the improvement of self-expression in writing. Emphasis is given to paragraph and essay development.

Course Content and Activities

In helping the student to become a proficient, confident writer of English, we have found the following course content and methods of presenting it to be successful:

First Quarter

English 101, Grammar -- actually a course in sentence structure -- covers the following grammatical problems of writing deficiencies

Unit 1	The Complete Sentence
Unit 2	Subject-Verb Agreement
Unit 3	Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Unit 4	Pronoun Reference
Unit 5	Pronoun Case
Unit 6	Voice
Unit 7	Tense Shift
Unit 8	Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers
Unit 9	Run-on Sentences
Unit 10	Punctuation
Unit 11	Parallelism
Unit 12	Wordiness
Unit 13	Choppy Sentences

Because the students' initial levels of proficiency vary, we employ the self-instructional, self-paced approach which allows each student to identify and to correct his particular writing deficiencies. We use the textbook HELP YOURSELF: A GUIDE TO WRITING AND REWRITING and a student manual developed by the Pitt Tech staff. Each unit contains a pretest, a rationale, performance objectives, learning activities and a post test. A student may test out of any unit by passing the pretest. If, however, his score on the pretest indicates that he had deficiencies in the unit material, he works through the unit until he has mastered it. The criterion for unit mastery is a score of 70% or higher on the unit post test. If a student meets the criterion, he moves on to the next unit. If however, he scores below 70%, he works through alternate learning activities to gain competency. When ready, the student takes a retest, without penalty. That is, if he scores a 93% on the second post test, 93% in his grade for the unit. There is no punitive grading; his grade is the highest score he can achieve.

The beauty of the self-instructional, self-paced method is that a skilled student can breeze through the material at his own pace, while a weaker student

can identify and correct his writing deficiencies at his own pace. And no one fails, for each student simply keeps working until he achieves mastery of the performance objectives for each unit. He may need one quarter of five quarters -- or he may eventually give up, but he does not fail.

Now, since our ultimate objective in the course is to enable the student to detect and correct errors in his own writing, we ask the student five times during the course to apply in a writing sample the grammatical techniques he has "learned." After passing a specified number of units, the student comes to class, selects a topic, and writes a paragraph. Each paragraph is marked "successful" if the student has applied all the grammatical techniques thus far covered in the course. For example, after the student has passed Unit 1, "The Complete Sentence," and Unit 2, "Subject-Verb Agreement," he is expected to write in complete sentences and to have all his subjects and verbs in agreement. If he is unable to employ these skills in his writing sample, he must continue his study of the first two units, and, when ready, try another writing sample. The purpose of the writing samples is, of course, to ensure that the student is indeed ready for English 102, Composition -- that he will not be hindered by grammatical errors in sentence structure and that he will be able to focus his full attention on paragraph and essay development.

The success of this course lies, first of all, in the feature that it is individualized, permitting advanced students to run rapidly through the material and giving slower students ample opportunity to build much needed skills. Secondly, the units are short, taking only one to one-and-a-half hours to complete. This factor allows the student to succeed often, receiving positive reinforcement at frequent intervals. Along the same line

is the lack of punitive grading. The fourth and possibly the most important factor in the success of the course is the informal, relaxed atmosphere of the classroom. Students sit and study, sipping cokes and coffee, munching donuts and peanuts, and exchanging tips and knowledge. Each student, in other words, does his own thing within what is paradoxically a highly structured framework.

Second Quarter

Unlike the first course, English 102 Composition is a seemingly unstructured course. Its design allows the student to explore himself and probe his surroundings, to find his own voice and express it freely, and to develop communication skills and have fun in the process. The course is essentially divided into the following phases:

Phase 1	Communication Games
Phase 2	Ungraded Writing Exercises
Phase 3	Student Journal
Phase 4	Structured Paragraph Development
Phase 5	Structured Essay Development

Because most students generally "freeze up when asked to put pen to paper, we spend the first four weeks freeing the student. We have found that our students fear writing because they experienced failure so frequently in high school. Writing to them is an awesome proposition, and if we are to reach them and change their negative attitudes, we need to alleviate the pressure and help them to relax. We need to give them time to build faith in themselves and in their ability to communicate. If they say "I can't," we have to show them that they can. Activities which we use to achieve this objective include numerous communication games, short ungraded writing assignments, and student journals.

Our first task is to provide a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. So, instead of going to class the first day and writing on the blackboard the traditional

Course Name
Course Number
Class Meetings
Office Hours

I write "My grandmother went to California and in her trunk she packed . . . ." I say the sentence and conclude it with my first name and an item that begins with the same initial sound (i.e., Bertie and bananas). A student then volunteers by repeating my completed sentence and adding his own name and item, (i.e., Mary and mustard). The game proceeds until each class member has added to the contents of grandmother's trunk.[2] Obviously, this activity is an introductory device whereby the students learn each other's names, I learn theirs, and they learn mine. But it also serves the higher purpose of building group unity, cohesiveness, and trust.

As you can tell, our philosophy is to keep it light, to establish group rapport, and to encourage individual freedom. As Dick Friedrich and David Kuester show in IT'S MINE AND I'LL WRITE IT THAT WAY, one way to maintain this atmosphere and to give the students the writing practice they so badly need is to assign short writing exercises which spark student interest and encourage group involvement and interaction. Some of our favorites include the following:

1. Select a member of the class and write a description of him. Read your description to classmates and let them identify him.

2. Write directions on how to play a group game. Then, have the class play the game. Don't explain your directions. Let the class be guided only by what you have written.

3. Write instructions on how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. At lunch, meet the class in the student lounge. Exchange your instructions with a member of the class, make your sandwich as directed, and eat it.

Devoting a couple of weeks to such activities is really not a waste of time, for the students quickly learn the relevance of clear writing. By having others carry out their directions, they realize what they did wrong and how to correct it. Since the exercises are not graded, the threat of failure is also removed. Finally, the students really enjoy these activities.[3]

Each student also keeps a journal, in which he writes about anything which comes to mind. His objective in writing is to find his own voice, his own distinctive style. Following Smokey Wilson's technique in STRUGGLES WITH BEARS, the student sits quietly for a minute and listens to the voice inside his head. He then records what it says. The words should flow from the voice, through the pen, and onto the paper. The student repeats this free flow exercise in class and out, as often as he can, day after day. Naturally, his writing becomes increasingly more fluent as he records his observations, thoughts, feelings, and recollections. Since the communication process is not complete until someone else has read the writing, the student often reads his journal entries aloud in class in order to receive feedback.[4] Frequently, the student will reflect on what has gone on in class, giving us instructors feedback on our successes and failures. The journal, then, serves the two-fold purpose of developing the student's fluency and of establishing better communication between himself and us as instructors.

At this point, I'm afraid that I've realized my worst fear, that of sounding arrogant, self-assured, and cocky -- perhaps even slightly pompous. Please, don't be confused; I'm not prescribing a panacea for the many ills of the composition classroom. All I am suggesting is that if you meet fear or resistance in your classes as we have, try letting up for the first three or four weeks. Surprise your students by providing a friendly, relaxed

atmosphere. Encourage group interaction through a variety of short, ungraded writing assignments which stimulate student interest and involvement. Keep a journal along with your students and read yours aloud in class as they do. Once the student becomes relaxed and begins to trust himself, he begins to build self-confidence. Once confident, he becomes willing to tackle the more difficult assignments of structured paragraph and essay writing. You haven't wasted his time, for upon completion of the course, the student will have a collection of his writing and, hopefully, a better attitude toward writing in general and toward his writing performance in particular. But, first, you must take him by surprise. If he says "I can't," show him that he, indeed, can.

NOTES

[1]J. N. Hook, THE TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH, 3rd. ed. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1965), pp. 13-15.

[2]Margaret L. Clark, Ella A. Erway, and Lee Beltzer, THE LEARNING ENCOUNTER: THE CLASSROOM AS A COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 130-132.

[3]Dick Friedrich and David Kuester, IT'S MINE AND I'LL WRITE IT THAT WAY (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 57-58.

[4]Smokey Wilson, STRUGGLES WITH BEARS: EXPERIENCE IN WRITING (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1973), pp. 15-33.

WHO REQUIRES REMEDIAL READING

by

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Remedial reading in technical institutes? Yes. Several questions occur: Who needs remedial reading? What are the students' high school backgrounds? What kinds of reading deficiencies appear in technical institute students? What corrective measures are offered in such a program? This paper is addressed to those questions as they are answered at Pitt Technical Institute, a public institution of about 1100 students.

The high school backgrounds of the students are varied. All students in the regular curricular program are graduates or have passed the General Educational Development Test. Most of the students who enter the remedial program took Phase 3 or Level 3 English at the secondary level. Many of the surrounding high schools offer the students their choice of Phases 1, 2, or 3. Phase 1 is designed to prepare students for college. Phase 2 is designed to prepare students to go to work immediately after graduation; many less able college-bound students also select Phase 2. Phase 3 is designed for students who need special help in English, usually especially in reading.

Some students from outside the immediate area are unaware of having been enrolled in any special groups; they were probably in heterogeneous classes.

Some students, older than 20, many of whom are veterans, are enrolled. They finished high school at a time when phasing was not offered and before integration. Thus, the range of students is very wide. For example, one student is a sixty-one year old man who came to the U. S. from France in 1921, is a veteran, and is reading on about the fourth grade level. Another is a very attractive and intelligent twenty-year old Black girl who graduated

from a nearby high school last year, having taken Phase 2 English, despite a reading level of about second grade. A more typical student is a twenty-year old male, reading on about the sixth grade level.

Intelligence ranges from slightly retarded to well above average. I.Q. scores are not readily available on most of the students. The range quoted is based on the scores available and on students' success in their curricula and socially with their peers.

Reading difficulties range from very severe to less, such as specific comprehension or speed problems. Students are selected for the reading program according to their scores on the California Survey of Reading Achievement, Junior High Level. We are not totally satisfied with this test, but we are restricted to selecting a one-hour group test able to be administered by untrained personnel. Each curriculum advisor administers the test to his own students. The student's score determines which class he takes. Below sixth grade, he registers for English 100/1000 which meets two hours a day five days a week. Students scoring between sixth and eighth grade register for English 1101 if they are vocational; this class meets two hours per week. If they are secretarial or mental health, they register for English 101-A, which meets three hours each week. Above eighth grade, vocational students receive credit by proficiency for English 1101; all other students register for grammar. It should be noted that we are considering raising the level to ninth grade or even higher for all secretarial students.

Further tests are administered during the first class meetings. The format of the class is explained and then students are taken out individually and tested while the rest of the class works. Each student receives visual and auditory screening. An individualized reading test is administered. Because of time limitations, a word naming test is used. We have used three

different ones and have not selected the final one yet. We use the Slosson Oral Reading Test, the San Diego Quick Assessment and a Secondary List based on the Dolch Word List. We would prefer to do more extensive testing; in some cases we do. However, time does not permit us to administer complete I.R.I's to each student.

Figure 1 shows the number of students scoring on each grade level on the Slosson Oral Reading Test.

Grade Level	Number in 100/1000	Number in 101A and 1101
2nd grade or below	3	1
3rd	1	0
4th	2	1
5th	4	7
6th	2	4
7th	3	23
8th	2	23
9th or above	0	11

It is mandatory that individual tests be administered in any remedial program. By chance alone, a student can score 5.0 on the California S.R.A. On the California Advanced Test, he can score 7.2. Obviously, further testing is necessary. Furthermore, many students are aware of some of their specific reading problems; and their comments, solicited at the time of individual testing, are of immense help in planning their program.

Specific deficiencies include a very wide range: phonics deficiencies, insufficient sight vocabulary, lack of general vocabulary, and omission of the final consonant or syllable of a word, thereby altering the type of word in a sentence and confusing meaning. In the latter case, an adverb might become a noun; this deficiency frequently appears when the student is asked to write sentences using new words. Other problems fall into more advanced skills areas: inability to select main idea, inability to summarize, inability to sequence, inability to use the dictionary rapidly, and others.

Corrective measures vary according to the nature and severity of the problem. For the severe remedial case, instruction begins at the beginning with phonics and sight word instruction. Learning 100, using the Aud-X, and Programmed Reading by Sullivan are the two basic programs utilized. Whenever specific problems, such as not knowing a particular word, appear, the tactile kinesthetic modality is used; tracing and writing the word aids retention for the severely disabled reader.

With less severe problems, materials specific to the student's problem are selected from the list at the end of this article.

In addition, the SQ3R method of reading-studying is taught. This method may appear a bit simple-minded to successful students, but to students who have no parents or relatives as model students, it is very helpful. A text is selected from those texts students have with them on the day the skill is introduced, and the method is demonstrated on any chapter they are currently studying.

Reading rates are discussed with classes above the 100/1000 level. Specifically, varying one's speed to suit the difficulty and importance of the reading material is taught.

For students who have no major reading problems except speed, practice at increasing speed is offered via the Controlled Reader and timed readings.

In classes above the 100/1000 level, practical reading skills specific to the student's curriculum are taught. Reading in journals in each field is offered. Instructor-designed worksheets ask the students to select important ideas or facts and to construct sentences with new words from the article. Vocabulary from the students' curriculum is stressed; lists are prepared by the reading faculty from texts used in courses at Pitt Tech. An extensive worksheet on the phone directory introduces its use as a basic reference tool.

Where applicable, work orders are used to practice comprehension skills directly related to the student's future work.

At all levels, periodicals are utilized. The choice of articles is left to the student who may select from periodicals in the reading room or at home. He completes a report form on each article read.

The importance of reading in general is stressed. This instructor questions the value of general admonitions to read as much as possible when reading is not a valued pasttime in the student's culture. However, exposure to a value system which does value reading introduces the student to another world-view, one of which institutions of higher learning are a part. Most students at technical institutions do aspire to a different culture in at least some respects. Therefore, the value of reading is presented. Some students immediately begin reading extensively and reporting to the instructor; obviously they assume the value of reading, at least for the quarter.

The key to a remedial program at the technical institute level is individual attention. Students nearly always score their own work. Then an aide (a student tutor) or the instructor goes over each item on which an error was made. If there were no errors, the student may read a paragraph to the instructor; this provides a means of monitoring the difficulty of the work for the student. Each error is regarded as an opportunity for learning. An attempt is made to see why the student made the error, then he is helped to understand the concept so that that type of error will occur less frequently. The student must feel that the instructor is non-judgmental; he must feel free to ask her any question that occurs. For example, even after a student had spent two hours on the concepts of topics and main ideas, he still did not comprehend the difference, so he went to the instructor and asked for further clarification, which she immediately gave.

Grades are a problem. In the program at Pitt Tech., the student may receive an A, B, C, or I. The I represents "Incomplete." If he receives an I, he signs up for the course again. No daily grades are kept. The student's grade is based on whether he reaches the cut-off score on a standardized test. Most students understand this immediately; only one or two need brief individual counselling on the futility of cheating.

Class size is very important in a remedial program; the true individualized instruction necessary for the severe reading problem cannot be offered in a large class. Even with an aide, fifteen is the maximum number for the two-hour daily program. Twenty is the absolute maximum for the more advanced classes; then the instructor must depend on the student to monitor his own work. Fifteen would be much more desirable there also.

One interesting change from high school is the excellent attendance of the very poor readers. They are told at the beginning of the quarter that there are no rules about attendance but that what they learn in the course depends on the number of hours they come and how hard they work. Most of them have missed no days or only one day of the program. Praise is the only immediate extrinsic reward for these students. It is given very quietly and individually and very frequently. A student reading on the first grade level deserves just as much praise for learning the difference in "went," "want," and "won't" as a more advanced student deserves for a well-written term paper.

Another important facet of the atmosphere is warmth. On the first day of the quarter, each student (and the instructor) learns the first names of everyone in the class by means of serial introductions.

In sum, at Pitt Technical Institute, there are a wide range of backgrounds, a wide range of problems, and a wide range of solutions.

Throughout this conference, some mild feelings of shock and helplessness have been expressed at the depth of the reading problem among some of our students. I think we should remind ourselves of Isaac Asimov's thought: ". . . there are and always have been (whatever the state of supposed 'literacy' in a particular society) both readers and nonreaders, with the former making up a tiny minority of, I guess, less that 1 percent."[1] We are attempting to make an entire country of readers, not just people who can read stop signs and simple material. Before we become too discouraged, we should remember that perhaps we are trying something never attempted before.

Materials List for English 100, 1000, 1100, 1101, 101-A

Materials are selected from the following on the basis of the student's needs.

	Materials	Publisher
1.	Adult Readings	Reader's Digest
2.	An American Album	SRA
3.	". . . and hereby hangs the tale" series of books	Mid-America Publishing, Inc.
4.	Aud-X, RA, AA, BA, CA, DEFA	EDL/McGraw-Hill
5.	Controlled Reader Filmstrip Sets AA, BA, CA, DA, FA	EDL/McGraw-Hill
6.	Fountain Valley	Psychotechnics
7.	Go Books, AA, BA, CA, DA, EA, FA	EDL/McGraw-Hill
8.	Help Yourself to Improve Your Reading	Reader's Digest

[1]Asimov, Isaac. "The Ancient and the Ultimate," p. 271, Journal of Reading. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, January, 1974.

	Materials	Publisher
9.	Holt Adult Basic Education First Series A. Life With the Lucketts B. The Thomases Live Here	Holt, Rinehart and Winston
10.	Lab II B	SRA
11.	Lab II C	SRA
12.	Manpower and Natural Resources	SRA
13.	New Reading Skill Builders	Reader's Digest
14.	Optimum Reading Achievement, Level 1	Psychotechnics
15.	Periodical Article Report Forms	Teacher Made
16.	Programmed Reading For Adults, Books by Buchanan	Webster/McGraw-Hill Book Company
17.	Reading, Books A-15 by Sullivan	Behavioral Research Laboratories
18.	Reading Attainment Systems, 1 and 2	Grolier
19.	Reading for a Purpose Reading for a Viewpoint	Follett
20.	Reading for Understanding	SRA
21.	Specific Skill Series	Barnell Loft
22.	Spelling Principles	Psychotechnics
23.	Study Guides for Journal Reading	Teacher Made
24.	Study Skills	EDL/McGraw-Hill
25.	Tapes, DA, EA, FA	EDL/McGraw-Hill
26.	Vocabulary Lists for each curriculum	Teacher Made
27.	We Are Black	SRA
28.	Words and Phrases	Psychotechnics